



Aboriginal news from across Turtle Island and beyond
January 30 – February 6, 2014

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Aboriginal Arts & Culture

Nordstrom reps to strut aboriginal-owned Manitobah Mukluks at Ottawa festival

By [Lucy Scholey](#) Metro
January 30, 2015 | 8:12 am

Nordstrom may be a U.S. store, but its representatives will be donning Manitoba-made aboriginal footwear at the opening of Ottawa festival Winterlude on Friday.

Manitobah Mukluks, a Winnipeg-based, aboriginal-owned mukluk manufacturer, will be warming the feet of about 40 Nordstrom “ambassadors” at the Rideau Canal during the opening festivities.

“They could have picked any brand, whether it was Sorel or UGGs,” said Manitobah Mukluks director of communications Tara Barnes. “Instead they decided to pick mukluks.”

Manitobah Mukluks creates footwear that’s a mix of traditional Metis moccasins with modern Vibram soles.

John Bailey, a spokesman for Nordstrom, said the store learned about the line during its Calgary opening. It now carries the brand in six of its stores.

The international store will open in the Rideau Centre on March 6.

Leading up to the event, there will be Lansdowne Park Snowscapes, skating at the park and on the canal, a giant snow slide and snow soccer at Jacques-Cartier Park, ice sculptures at Confederation Park and more.

Winterlude runs in Ottawa until Feb. 16.

Direct Link:

<http://metronews.ca/news/winnipeg/1275424/nordstrom-reps-to-strut-aboriginal-owned-manitobah-mukluks-at-ottawa-festival/>

Culture and fun for everyone at Saskatoon Cree classes

Libraries holding events across the province for Aboriginal Story Telling Month

Reported by **Kelly Malone**

First Posted: Jan 31, 2015 2:04pm

A teacher walks with a crock pot of stew into a small room with a table surrounded by chairs at the back of the Carlyle King Library ahead of a Cree class in Saskatoon. The students, both young and grown and from all walks of life, crowd around the delicious smells with their textbooks out, ready to learn.

"I just want to learn as many languages in Canada as possible," Nya, a student from Africa, said. "I work in the crisis centre and I deal with people from First Nations and people will tell me 'I speak Saulteaux, I speak Cree.'"

Nya, who already speaks seven languages, is one of a group of around 10 students who have come out on a chilly Thursday night to learn Cree.

Edmund Mcalees and his wife sit on one side of the table with their noses in their books, sounding out words they've never spoken before. He said they wanted to learn something different.

"It's interesting to hear and see the words. The words are spelled one way and said a different way," he said.

They are taking part in the free classes at Saskatoon Public Libraries and it's just coincidence Mcalees chose Aboriginal Storytelling Month to learn the language.

"We don't (story tell) enough in English... In the older days and that, that's how they passed on what their parents did, and what their parents' parents did," Mcalees said.

For Aboriginal people, storytelling is a gift, a very old custom and how the spirit world is able to talk to people in the physical world. Stories are used to teach, entertain, and to remember.

Across the province for Aboriginal Storytelling Month, there will be all different kinds of activities from a reading by Northern Saskatchewan author Harold Johnson to an Aboriginal-themed games day.

Sitting at the head of the table in the Cree class, Barbara Still hopes to share some of those experiences with her own children. From the Ochapowace First Nation, Still said she wasn't taught her language growing up.

"I decided to take the class because I have three children already taking Cree classes," she said. "When I enrolled my kids to the bilingual class I wanted to talk to them in Cree fluently and them understand me and answer me back."

With a laugh, she said her children are having an easier time learning than the "old people" but she is "stepping up her game".

"I could give them heck in my own Cree language and people would be like 'what are they saying?'" Still said drawing a laugh from the classroom. "When I look at foreign people they do speak their native tongue to their kids and they are just talking away and I am just like 'man I want to do that with my kids.'"

Wade, who didn't give his last name as to not spoil the surprise, wants to show family and friends who are Cree speakers that he has also learned.

"My family are actually working with some of the elders up (near Prince Albert) to write it," he said, adding he wants to tell stories in Cree.

"It isn't done enough. Children need to learn their background, who they are, where they come from, it doesn't matter what culture."

Direct Link:

<http://cjme.com/story/culture-and-fun-everyone-saskatoon-cree-classes/529937>

Aboriginal storytelling on display in Rosthern, Sask.

Métis artist, writer Leah Dorion among the storytellers

[CBC News](#) Posted: Feb 03, 2015 1:42 PM CT Last Updated: Feb 03, 2015 1:42 PM CT

Storytelling is an important part of First Nations culture and it's being celebrated this month as part of Saskatchewan Aboriginal Storytelling Month.

Among the participants is Métis artist and writer Leah Dorion.

Dorion says she learned from the best — her own family, who shared tales with her as a child.

"I remember having stories told to me with repetition and drama, just so they would be remembered by me," she said.

While the storytelling tradition is not unique to aboriginal cultures, it's something they cherish, she said.

"I think it's one of those parts of First Nations, Métis culture that we treasure so dearly," she said.

"It's our identity, our world view. So much of our land-based knowledge is wrapped up in stories that were told orally."

The storytelling event is Tuesday night in Rosthern. It begins at 7 p.m. CST at the Station Arts Centre.

Direct Link:

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/saskatchewan/aboriginal-storytelling-on-display-in-rosthern-sask-1.2943532>

Aboriginal Business & Finance

Realtors, chiefs want province to help save aboriginal home ownership scheme

By: Mary Agnes Welch

Posted: 01/30/2015 2:30 PM | [Comments: 23](#) | Last Modified: 01/30/2015 2:54 PM | [Updates](#)



Shelly Peebles and her son Dylan, 16, are proud new home owners as they move into their own residence on Friday under the Tipi Mitawa program, organized with the help of the Manitoba Real Estate Association and the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs. Provincial government funding has run out and the two groups are trying to persuade provincial authorities to save the program.

The province's realtors and the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs want the province to save a unique aboriginal home ownership program that has already helped 14 families buy their first house in Winnipeg.

The Tipi Mitawa program gives homebuyers help with their down payment, courses in budgeting and home maintenance and sometimes a monthly mortgage subsidy. Though the Manitoba Real Estate Association originally hoped to help 40 families, piecemeal provincial funding has run out after 14.

Shelley Peebles, a First Nations woman and single mother, is the last participant to get help coming up with the 15 per cent down payment. She got the keys to her Transcona home Friday.

"I'm not letting go of these things," said the banking officer at a Winnipeg casino. Peebles said it would have taken her years to come up with even a five per cent down payment.

"I've always wanted to own my own home," she said. "It's been a dream."

Harry DeLeeuw, past president of the Manitoba Real Estate Association, said a maximum of \$87,000 over 10 years is needed per home, which includes the down payment, a mortgage subsidy and funding to run 10-week courses. But he said the money is much more effective than rent subsidies for properties the province must also maintain.

The AMC and the Manitoba realtors have met with Family Services and Housing Minister Kerri Irvin-Ross.

Direct Link:

<http://www.winnipegfreepress.com/local/Province-chiefs-want-province-to-help-save-aboriginal-home-ownership-scheme-290359471.html>

Credit card proves extravagant spending at now-broke Aboriginal-owned investment company

[Investigates](#) | 30. Jan, 2015 by [tlamirande](#) |



MELISSA RIDGEN

APTN Investigates

An Aboriginal-owned investment group that was supposed to help end poverty on Manitoba First Nations instead blew its money on strippers, booze, fancy food and exotic trips, *APTN Investigates* has learned.

Corporate credit card statements from Tribal Councils Investment Group show \$13,000 spent over two days in 2012 at Sapphire, a high-end Vegas strip club.

Another American Express statement shows \$5,300 spent one day at "L.R. Inc Etobicoke."

A profile of strip clubs aimed at businessmen visiting Toronto on the website nowtoronto.com, says “The Landing Strip ... (is a) high-end club in west Etobicoke... for business discretion, strip chips charged to a client’s credit card appear as D.E. Limited or L.R. Inc.”

Another statement shows a \$3,800 dinner at Prime, a posh eatery at the Bellagio hotel in Vegas.

Over the course of five days in January 2012, \$3,900 was spent at Hy’s Steakhouse in Winnipeg.

All of the charges were on credit card statements made out to former TCIG CEO Allan McLeod’s.



An *APTN* investigation into the rise and fall of TCIG also found McLeod’s wife Karen had cheque signing authority for TCIG’s charitable foundation and wrote a cheque for \$29,650 to the Pursuit of Excellence Hockey Academy. Their son attends school there.

APTN also found flight logs that show TCIG staff enjoyed many trips on the corporate jet, including to the Bahamas and Vegas. The Bahamas flight cost \$31,000.

TCIG was founded in 1990 by Manitoba’s seven tribal councils. They each kicked in \$25,000 to create an investment company that would pay dividends back to them and flow into the 55 communities they represent. TCIG owned Arctic Beverages, a distributor of Pepsi and Frito Lay products throughout the north. At its peak in the early 2000s, TCIG had investments in transportation, fuel, health services, banking, restaurants, golf courses and real estate, to name a few.

“Just the model of straight business investment and straight return which allowed communities to take dividends and do whatever it was that was important — so if they wanted to increase social services or wanted to help youth in training there were no strings on the dollars,” says Wanda Wuttunee, professor of Aboriginal business at the University of Manitoba’s Asper School of Business.

During its heyday, TCIG was grossing \$100-million a year. But the seven tribal councils were only getting a hundred or so thousand dollars in dividends. It appeared much of the

profits were funding head office extravagance. People started scrutinizing the board and management.

“This is Manitoba, for Pete’s sake,” said Winnipeg Free Press business reporter Martin Cash, who covered TCIG over its lifespan. “No matter how large a company you are, you can’t flaunt it around this town.”

Despite all the riches at TCIG, Alan Isfeld of First Nations Voice newspaper pointed out in 2013, the dividends being paid to the tribal councils worked out to at most “\$8.37 per year” for every man, woman and child.

Meanwhile TCIG’s board of directors had signed McLeod to a 25-year “irrevocable” contract as CEO. It paid him in excess of \$1-million a year plus bonuses and perks.

“He was being paid more than a million dollars a year for a company that was grossing about \$100-million a year,” Cash said. “I made comparison to the Northwest Company which grosses \$1-billion a year and that (CEO) makes just a little bit more than McLeod was earning. A company 10 times the size.”

And that’s tax-free income.

McLeod claims to live on the Brokenhead First Nation, north of Winnipeg, even though he and his wife regularly entertained at a home on Woodstone Drive in East St. Paul, a tony suburb of Winnipeg. Manitoba Land Titles listed Karen McLeod as the owner and said she sold it in 2012.

McLeod was overthrown in 2013, along with a handful of senior staff, in a coup by the tribal councils. He and his wife still claim to live on the Brokenhead First Nation and insist a home in Kelowna, B.C. where their children attend school, is only a “recreational property.”

After 24 years and multi-millions of dollars, there’s very little left of TCIG, a receptionist, office manager and a ragtag board of directors have little to do after TCIG’s assets were sold off to pay bills.

APTN learned in addition to questionable head office spending, investors themselves weren’t paying bills, which sank the TCIG ship. They owed TCIG about \$8 million at a time when TCIG owed suppliers and lenders about \$9 million.

No one from TCIG would be interviewed. But a statement from manager Heather Berthelette says “restructuring has not been easy or without casualties but we are ready to humbly begin to stand for what we originally stood for.”

As for Allan McLeod, he twice canceled a sit down-interview with *APTN* and has declined to respond by phone or email to questions about his time as CEO. He is suing TCIG for wrongful dismissal and TCIG is countersuing over how he ran the company.

“Yes, bad things happened and it’s sad that it’s not there and it’s sad that those (55) communities will not have an opportunity to benefit from a company like TCIG,” said Wuttunee, adding though that the TCIG model could work under different circumstances.

Late Friday night, McLeod responded to *APTN Investigates* with a statement that deals with numerous media stories about him.

“I have been the subject of vague, unfounded, false allegations that are not based in evidence,” wrote Mcleod.

Mcleod did not comment specifically to either the APTN Investigates story dealing with spending allegations.

Direct Link:

<http://aptn.ca/news/2015/01/30/credit-card-proves-extravagant-spending-now-broke-aboriginal-owned-investment-company/>

Manitoba aboriginal homeownership program to lose funding

Manitoba Tipi Mitawa on last 126K of cash from province earmarked for mortgage down payments

[CBC News](#) Posted: Jan 30, 2015 5:38 PM CT Last Updated: Jan 30, 2015 10:34 PM CT

A Manitoba program that helps aboriginal people buy homes is in jeopardy after the province announced Friday it plans to stop contributing funding toward down payments for families in need.

The program, Manitoba Tipi Mitawa, helped Shelley Peebles sign her first mortgage recently.

“I never thought it would be here,” said Peebles. “But here it is.”

Peebles rented for years under the assumption that owning a home was the stuff of fantasy.

But after scrimping and saving, and thanks to the Manitoba Tipi Mitawa, her dreams came true.

“I guess the biggest obstacle was to save the money for the down payment,” said Peebles. “Being a single parent, it's not always easy to save that extra money.”

Peebles and her son are the fourteenth family to get a 15 per cent down payment since 2009.

The Manitoba Real Estate Association kicks in five per cent; the province, 10 per cent.

Harry DeLeeuw, co-chair of Manitoba Tipi Mitawa, said to qualify candidates must be aboriginal, and have a steady job and good credit score.

According to DeLeeuw, 27 per cent of aboriginal people own a home, compared to 72 per cent of the general population.

“What our program does is provides stability, that is really the key, stability within the family unit, stability in education, in schooling,” he said.

But the stability of the program is up in the air.

“Manitoba Housing is now shifting focus to other projects,” said a spokesperson with the province. “We did provide four years of funding for this program, and the program retains the remaining \$126,000 we allocated to put towards remaining projects.”

The Assembly of Manitoba chiefs said the program is crucial for the community.

“We want to have good lives just like everyone else,” said Jason Whitford, program manager with Eagle Urban Transition Centre. “We want our kids going to good schools, we want our families healthy.”

Peebles said having a place to put down long term roots gives her a sense of independence.

“It's my house, I can decorate it how I want to, do with it what I want, and don't have to live on someone else's terms,” said Peebles.

The province has allotted a total of \$767,618 to Manitoba Tipi Mitawa, \$641,618 of which has been used to put people in homes to date.

Direct Link:

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/manitoba-aboriginal-homeownership-program-to-lose-funding-1.2938715>

Revenue sharing with First Nations gaining traction

By [Doug Lett](#) Producer Global News

February 2, 2015 2:28 pm



SASKATOON – Revenue sharing with First Nations is an idea that is gaining ground across the country. That’s according to professor Ken Coates, the University of Saskatchewan research chair for regional innovation.

“This is one of those ideas that was off the table 25 years ago,” Coates told Global News. “(But) First Nations have been pushing it for about two decades now, it’s really found its legs. This is going to be one of the ways in which we accommodate aboriginal people in the resource economy.”

Coates recently authored a national research paper on revenue sharing with First Nations. The Ottawa-based [Macdonald-Laurier Institute](#) has released Coates' 44 page paper called "[Sharing the Wealth](#)."

He says there has been a big increase in resource development across the country – and First Nations are playing a major role.

"Now there's absolutely no denying that aboriginal folks have a key role to play in the development of Canadian resources, and they have to be involved in ways that are constructive and positive and forward looking," said Coates.

"When First Nations people are involved in resource development, you increase dramatically the total economic return to a province, or a region," he said. "That money doesn't flow out of the country ... that money actually circulates within the province, so if you look at a place like the Yukon, where they have seven or eight mines that are now active or under development, we are seeing an increase not just in mining activity, but an increase in car sales, in house purchases, things of that sort, because the First Nations money is staying in the region."

Coates says the idea of sharing resource wealth with First Nations was almost ridiculed two decades ago. But a series of court rulings have shifted power towards First Nations treaty rights.

And now, he says, resource rich provinces like British Columbia and Quebec are embracing the idea. He thinks Saskatchewan and Alberta should be re-evaluating their position as well.

"They basically have argued that when Saskatchewan and Alberta get resources they pass it on to all people in the province, all residents get the economic benefit of the development of resources," he said.

"But British Columbia used to argue that as well, and British Columbia has recognized really simply that if it wants resource development to go ahead in a systematic way, if it wants approval from First Nations to develop on their lands, they had better accept the idea of resource revenue sharing."

Coates argues First Nations are showing they have the track record and the management skills to make revenue sharing work.

"We now have aboriginal communities across the country that manage tens of millions if not hundreds of millions of dollars of resources," he said. "We never hear about them."

Direct Link:

<http://globalnews.ca/news/1806900/revenue-sharing-with-first-nations-gaining-traction/>

Quebec aboriginal community sues Ottawa, third-party managers for \$30 million

Canadian government and two third-party managers for \$30 million in damages, claiming breach of fiduciary duty. The Algonquins of Barriere Lake First Nation are suing the

By: [Joanna Smith](#) Ottawa Bureau reporter, Published on Tue Feb 03 2015

OTTAWA—A Quebec aboriginal community is suing the federal government and two third-party managers for \$30 million in damages, claiming they have suffered irreparable harm while being kept in the dark about their financial situation.

Algonquins of Barriere Lake First Nation is one of [28 communities](#) that have yet to submit its financial information to be posted online as required by the [First Nations Financial Transparency Act](#), which resulted in Ottawa withholding funding for non-essential services as a sanction.

The community argues, in a statement of claim filed at the Ontario Superior Court in Toronto last Friday, it was unable to comply because the federal government and Hartel Financial Management Corp., which has been its third-party manager since April 1, 2013, has not provided the band council with all the information it would need in order to do so.

“Accountability and transparency is a two-way process,” Tony Wawatie, interim director-general of Barriere Lake, in a telephone interview Tuesday.

The lawsuit names the federal government, Hartel and its former third-party manager, BDO Canada, which held the contract from March 1, 2010 to March 31, 2013 as defendants in the lawsuit.

[ABL vs AG of Canada](#)

The statement of claim alleges breach of fiduciary duty, breach of contract, interference with economic relations and negligent misrepresentation and also asks for an injunction from the court to end the third-party management agreement between Hartel and Aboriginal Affairs.

None of the allegations has been tested in court.

The statement of claim notes the Aboriginal Affairs department first appointed a third-party manager to oversee its spending in 2006 and that third-party managers have since collected approximately \$6 million in fees over that time period.

“These are monies that would otherwise be payable to Barriere Lake, for the benefit of the community,” says the statement of claim, which notes the community has a housing shortage and high unemployment.

The statement of claim alleges both BDO and Hartel refused to co-operate with the chief or council, withheld financial information, ignored or rebuffed requests to see the third-party management agreement, acted unreasonably and unprofessionally and both “at times have expressed contempt, disrespect and disdain for the community”.

The statement of claim says the federal government shares responsibility for the situation, because officials at Aboriginal Affairs were kept apprised of their struggles with the third-party managers.

A lawyer for Hartel said it was too early to comment and a lawyer representing BDO did not respond to a telephone message Tuesday.

The office of Aboriginal Affairs Minister Bernard Valcourt responded to the lawsuit Tuesday with a statement emailed by spokeswoman Emily Hillstrom.

The statement noted the department told Barriere Lake last November what would be required to exit third-party management, a fact Wawatie confirmed.

“It is important to note that this measure is used as a last resort only. It is applied to ensure the continued delivery of programs and services to community members,” the statement said, adding there would be no further comment as the matter is before the court.

Direct Link:

<http://www.thestar.com/news/canada/2015/02/03/quebec-aboriginal-community-sues-ottawa-third-party-managers-for-30-million.html>

Aboriginal Community Development

Giving: Task force improves the health of dogs and cats in First Nation communities

[Andrea Cox](#)

Published on: January 30, 2015 Last Updated: January 31, 2015 6:42 AM MST



Some children at Saddle Lake enjoy a visit by the Alberta Spay/Neuter Task Force last June.

From now until Feb. 14 you can make a huge difference in the life of a dog or cat by donating to the Double Your Love Donation Drive in support of the Alberta Spay/Neuter Task Force.

For every dollar donated, local realtor and longtime supporter Heather Waddell will match donations dollar for dollar to a total of \$25,000. But that's not all. If the goal of \$25,000 is reached, she has pledged an additional \$10,000.

All in, it will be a grand total donation of \$35,000.

"I'm really thrilled that I am able to help," says Waddell, who is an ardent animal lover.

"I think that it is such critical and important work, stopping the overpopulation of dogs and cats, because, sadly, we can't rescue them all."

The task force evolved organically, spearheaded in 2009 by animal lovers and animal rescue volunteers RJ Bailot and Nancy Larsen. The two were working on First Nations lands rescuing animals and finding them new homes.

"It just wasn't possible to find all of the dogs and re-home them," he recalls.

That's when he and Nancy came up with an innovative solution that targeted First Nations communities, and so they formed the task force. They knew that to solve the problem, they had to get to its root, which is overpopulation.

Essentially, the task force puts together a volunteer team of close to 100 people including vets and surgical assistants. Eight times a year, they set up what would be akin to a MASH unit with examination areas, a triage zone, surgery stations and recovery rooms. And it is all created in a school or gym in a chosen Alberta First Nations community.

Throughout the course of a weekend clinic, dogs and cats are examined, treated for parasites, vaccinated, spayed or neutered and then tattooed. Upward of 450 animals are treated during a visit.

The task force travels all over Alberta and has visited pretty much every corner and many tribes, including Blood, Maskwacis and Wabasca First Nations.

Every time the task force holds a clinic, it must apply for a temporary licence for surgery. Bailot says the guidelines are strict.

"All of our vets have been working for 10 or 15 years in their own practices," he says. "It is the same treatment you would get in a vet clinic."

It is a community driven and community engaged project.

"So we always have community liaisons with us that come door to door. The First Nations communities contact us and really work with us to make this happen," says Bailot, noting that many of these areas are remote and do not have access to the resources common in cities to assist with the care of their animals.

"Most don't have shelters or vet services," he says.

Many of the First Nation children help out by cleaning kennels or feeding the dogs — they like being involved and checking it all out.

Bailot says the task force is the largest organization of its kind in Canada.

“It is pretty amazing. Every time we have a clinic, I am always blown away by the support, amazing volunteers and how quickly everything comes together.”

Each clinic costs approximately \$26,000, with most of the volunteers paying their own way.

“This past year, we were able to help over 3,500 dogs and cats throughout the province, and this money will allow us to help so many others,” says Bailot, noting that the demand is huge.

“I probably get a call every other week from a community wanting some help. We are being kept extremely busy.”

The current initiative started Jan. 7 and runs through to Valentine’s Day.

You can follow the drive and make a donation at www.abtaskforce.org.

Direct Link:

<http://calgaryherald.com/news/local-news/giving-task-force-improves-the-health-of-dogs-and-cats-in-first-nation-communities>

Documents say cost of running water for cluster of Manitoba reserves: \$165M



Chinta Puxley, The Canadian Press

Published Thursday, February 5, 2015 7:29AM CST

Last Updated Thursday, February 5, 2015 12:26PM CST

WINNIPEG -- Internal federal documents estimate it will cost \$165 million to replace government-issued slop pails with modern indoor plumbing on four of Canada's poorest reserves, but only a fraction of that has been budgeted.

Regional reports from Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada and obtained by The Canadian Press say \$22 million was budgeted in 2011 to install

rudimentary indoor plumbing in hundreds of homes in a cluster of northern Manitoba reserves known as Island Lake.

The reports date back to the fall of 2013 and were received under access-to-information legislation.

They say upgraded homes were outfitted with basic plumbing hooked up to individual water and sewage tanks. Although the reports repeatedly say much more money is needed for a community sewage system, no new money has been budgeted in more than three years.

"The project costs exceed available funding," states a report dated March 2014.

A spokesperson for Aboriginal Affairs Minister Bernard Valcourt said the minister was not available for comment and did not provide anyone to answer questions.

Emily Hillstrom sent an emailed statement saying the government has made progress over the past four years, with updated plumbing and new water trucks, to improve the situation on the reserves.

"We recognize there is more work to be done and we will continue to work with the First Nations to build on the tangible progress accomplished so far," she wrote.

The Island Lake community -- made up of St. Theresa Point, Wasagamack, Garden Hill and Red Sucker First Nations -- came under a global microscope during the H1N1 flu outbreak in 2009. There were hundreds of cases of the flu, mostly in children, on the remote reserves.

Chiefs blamed a lack of running water and overcrowding for the rapid spread of the virus and studies later backed them up.

"Preparations for remote First Nations communities prior to future outbreaks should include ... attention to fundamental health determinants, including housing conditions such as overcrowding, access to potable water and sanitation," said a study published in the Canadian Journal of Public Health in April 2012.

As part of its response to the outbreak, the federal government sent body bags to the reserves, raising the ire of chiefs. They said that when they asked for help bring running water to half the homes on the reserves, Ottawa sent 1,000 slop pails to use as toilets.

Jonathan Flett, executive director of the Island Lake Tribal Council, said the upgrades that have been done are a Band-Aid solution. With up to 18 people living in one home, sewage tanks fill up fast, he said.

"Eighteen people have to go 18 times a day, maybe twice," he said.

The reserves don't have enough water and sewage trucks to keep up with demand and there is nowhere to store them out of the cold. All outdoor water tanks have heaters to keep them from freezing, which adds to already soaring hydro bills, Flett said.

The government reports say installing the kind of indoor plumbing found in other municipalities doesn't come cheap.

"Many houses in the Island Lake communities do not have indoor plumbing and in some cases there is no space for a bathroom," the reports repeatedly state.

"Houses must be retrofitted with indoor plumbing before they can be connected to water and waste-water systems. This requires additional time, funds and considerable planning. The location of these communities, on the Canadian Shield, makes piped systems more costly to install."

An internal report dated Sept. 30, 2013, suggested the federal government would not be paying for the upgrades and hinted the reserves -- the majority of which are under financial co-management -- would have to find a way to pay for the projects themselves.

"The region will soon be engaging the Island Lake Tribal Council in discussions about the need to access private capital," the report said. "It is anticipated a considerable amount of protest will be received."

The reserves don't have the ability to raise their own cash without borrowing funds from elsewhere in their budgets, Flett said.

"That will create a problem for our communities."

Grand Chief David Harper with Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak, which represents the province's northern First Nations, said the upgrades done so far aren't enough.

There are still 400 homes without any form of running water, he said. New plumbing in other homes, housing elders and the sick, won't last long in the harsh Island Lakes climate, he added.

First Nations people deserve the same access to running water as those living in municipalities off reserve, Harper added.

"It's not good enough."

Read more:

<http://winnipeg.ctvnews.ca/documents-say-cost-of-running-water-for-cluster-of-manitoba-reserves-165m-1.2221869#ixzz3RGh9K9c6>

'Seven Oaks' sacred: chief

Wednesday, 4 February 2015 - 3:34pm

By Duane Hicks

As town council weighs whether to ban dogs from the area commonly known as "Seven Oaks," Agency One bands would like to raise public awareness that the land in question is of spiritual significance.

"I think people shouldn't forget that it was originally set aside as a reserve for First Nations, and it definitely was land that had a lot of ceremonial uses," said Couchiching First Nation Chief Sara Mainville.

“It’s land that was considered sacred to the local First Nations because there was, in the past, people buried there,” she noted.

“There was also mounds set there not just for burial purposes but for offerings and things like that,” Chief Mainville added, saying it “has a significant spiritual value” to local First Nations.

While the four Agency One bands can’t do anything on the land right now because it’s in “legal limbo,” Chief Mainville said they have been planning for the future.

“There’s uncertainty about the legal status of those lands,” she noted. “But we certainly are working hard to get it back as reserve land.

“And as part of that, we want to honour the cultural significance of the land by having a heritage centre there.”

Chief Mainville said if their plans come to fruition, the land use will have to change.

“Our number-one plan there is to have recognition of our heritage in some kind of significant and symbolic but also useful way that will have utility for tourism, as well,” she remarked.

Chief Mainville said Fort Frances and Couchiching FN worked together during the flooding last spring to protect the shoreline, but there was some erosion or land loss in that area because of the significant water flow near Seven Oaks.

“My main concern was there may well be things buried there that we want make sure continue to rest; we don’t want any harm or damage to it,” she stressed.

“So that, really, was the start of my discussions and my concerns about dog feces and bird feces there,” Chief Mainville said.

“And that there has to be some concerted effort—not just the town but also the First Nations—to remember what it was and what it still is, and that we have to honour and recognize what’s there.”

She noted the town and the four bands— Couchiching, Naicatchewenin, Nicickousemenecaning, and Stanjikoming First Nations—agreed to talk to their communities.

Chief Mainville said Couchiching band members do use the land, including to fish from shore, and she felt it important to remind everyone, especially the youth, what the land was and how it’s still significant to everyone.

For example, not many people know that the most southern point of land there is perhaps the most spiritually-significant part.

As reported last week, the town is considering banning dogs from Seven Oaks.

At a public meeting last Monday night, Fort Frances CAO Mark McCaig noted the reason for this is twofold.

First, the town has received complaints about dog feces at Seven Oaks, as well as dogs running at large (off-leash) in the summer months.

Secondly, the town currently is consulting with Agency One bands to resolve land matters that are in litigation, and Seven Oaks holds great cultural significance for area First Nations.

At that same public meeting, numerous dog owners told council they want to keep using the land, saying they and their dogs love the area and that issues over dog feces can be addressed through enforcement.

Some also noted that geese have been making more of a mess there than dogs.

Direct Link: <http://www.ffmpeg.com/node/276676>

Aboriginal Crime & Justice

Charges stayed against former chief of Montana Cree First Nation

Chief Buffalo's former lawyer says case caused 'serious damage' in relationships with First Nations people

[CBC News](#) Posted: Feb 04, 2015 2:32 PM MT Last Updated: Feb 04, 2015 6:38 PM MT



Tobacco smuggling charges against former Montana Cree chief Carolyn Buffalo have been stayed. (CBC)

Carolyn Buffalo, former chief of the Montana Cree First Nation in Maskwacis, Alta. will not be returning to court to face tobacco smuggling charges.

The charges under the Tobacco Tax Act faced by Buffalo were stayed last week [four years after they were first laid](#).

Buffalo was charged with possessing and storing contraband cigarettes after the province and the RCMP seized 16 million cigarettes from a Quonset hut on the Montana First Nation in January 2011.

Buffalo's former lawyer, Julian Falconer, said the case was a waste of taxpayers' money and damaged relations between the courts and First Nations people.

"It really calls into question the inability of provincial and federal governments to understand that they need to work with their aboriginal partners rather than clubbing them with the justice system," said Falconer.

"The effort to bring down the arm of the state on First Nations is no better than exemplified than what Ms. Buffalo has been put through for the last four years. It's unconscionable."

Late last year, the trial was adjourned after the defence questioned the motivation of a former co-accused who was expected to testify against Buffalo. It was suggested a deal may have been made in return for his testimony.

The charges against Buffalo and former band councillor Leonard Standing-On-The Road were stayed on Jan.28, 2015.

Charges against Robbie Dickson continue.

Direct Link:

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/edmonton/charges-stayed-against-former-chief-of-montana-cree-first-nation-1.2945312>

Fort William First Nation turns to Guardian Angels for help

[CBC News](#) Posted: Feb 05, 2015 11:20 AM ET Last Updated: Feb 06, 2015 7:29 AM ET



The volunteer foot soldiers known as the Guardian Angels continue to work on establishing a chapter in the city of Thunder Bay to help with public safety. (Guardian Angels Canada/Facebook)

The chief of the Fort William First Nation says the timing could not be better to welcome the Guardian Angels to her community.

Georjann Morriseau said she was receptive when local chapter head Ian Hodgkinson reached out to her a few months back.

The volunteer foot soldiers made their name in New York City close to 30 years ago but haven't been received warmly everywhere they go, with critics questioning their effectiveness in reducing crime and accusing them of vigilantism.

[According to information on the group's website](#), there are now more than 130 Guardian Angels safety patrol chapters throughout the world, with constant additions being made. They say they promote public safety through a variety of violence prevention programs.

Morriseau said she and Hodgkinson met this week and agreed to work on setting up a Guardian Angels chapter on the First Nation.



Fort William First Nation chief Georgann Morriseau. (Nicole Ireland/CBC)

“Ian and I shared a lot of the same values and the same concerns,” she said.

“At the end of it, it was 'we want to come to the community and make it a safer environment for everybody.' And we will make sure we do whatever we can to make sure that happens.”

Looking for more support

[Hodgkinson met with Thunder Bay Police Chief JP Levesque last month](#), when he outlined his role representing the Guardian Angels. Police issued a press release afterwards, saying “before a chapter is set up in Thunder Bay, local police want to ensure the organization has high ethical and legal standards. It is important that any volunteer organization ensure that members are screened regarding their background.”

Morriseau said her community needs additional support to battle threats to children posed by drugs, alcohol abuse, gangs and the sex industry.

She said Hodgkinson has been invited to present his plans for a Guardian Angels chapter to the Fort William First Nation band council.

“The Guardian Angels and Ian came in at such perfect timing because we are now at that point where we want to see action,” she said.

“We, as a leadership of Fort William First Nation and the community, want to start protecting our community and protecting our children and our families.”

First Nation wants 'to take action'

Hodgkinson said Chief Morriseau identified several concerns on the First Nation he feels the Guardians can help address.

“There is a drug problem that exists — alcohol use and abuse.

[There is a feeling of] not being accepted [and] not having the opportunity to study,” he said.



Guardian Angels chapter leader Ian Hodgkinson says his group wants to "get over the problem of segregation that has existed in Thunder Bay." (Guardian Angels Canada/Facebook)

"Those are the kinds of things that are on the table. That's where I think we are going to go right now, at least with the youth."

Morriseau said bringing the Guardians on board will go a long way in helping the First Nations' youth.

"The youth want to take action," she said.

"We are behind them 100 per cent, and I've said it before, and I'll say it again: drug-dealing, gangs, violence, and sex offenders have no room in our community and no room in our lives."

Hodgkinson said the Guardian Angels also continue to work on establishing a chapter in the city of Thunder Bay.

He said Mayor Keith Hobbs is the first Canadian politician in the Guardian Angels' 35-year history to support their activities.

"One of our goals was to get over the problem of segregation that has existed here in Thunder Bay since I was born," he said.

"I have the idea to have as many aboriginal youth involved in the guardian Angels program. I think exclusion is one of the big problems here."

Hodgkinson, who hails from Thunder Bay, is also known as the professional wrestler Vampiro.

Direct Link:

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/thunder-bay/fort-william-first-nation-turns-to-guardian-angels-for-help-1.2946173>

Aboriginal Education & Youth

“Decolonization is not an Aboriginal problem, it’s a Canadian one”

First Nation Panelists Discuss Memories and Hopes for Aboriginal Education in Canada

News by [Jonathan Cook](#) — Published January 30, 2015 | Updated January 30, 2015 |



Lindsay Morcom, Alanis Obomsawin and Kenneth Deer formed a panel to discuss the state of First Nation education in Canada and the future.

Kenneth Deer hasn’t read Bill C-33, the First Nation’s Control of First Education Act. “And I don’t intend to,” he musingly told an audience of approximately 100 people.

A member of the Mohawk community in Kahnawà:ke, Deer is well versed in taking control of one’s own cultural education.

“Change takes place by revolution or evolution,” he said of decolonizing Canada’s educational system.

Alongside Alanis Obomsawin and Lindsay Morcom, Deer joined an Aboriginal panel at Concordia University last Tuesday night to discuss experiences within Canada’s problematic historical teachings and its future.

In 1978, revolution was at the forefront for Deer. In protest to Bill 101, which mandated approximately 300 Mohawk students to be taught in French or English, parents pulled their children out of a Quebec high school.

“We marched from the school all the way back home with banners,” Deer said. “The English media loved it.”

According to Deer, on that Wednesday, the parents sent their children home with the promise that a school catered towards their own culture would be created by Monday. With an understandable delay, the parents administered standardized tests to keep the students distracted and maintain their promise.

“I remember because I was responsible for doing that,” he said about the decoy quizzes given on Monday. “I never corrected that test, I’ll tell you.”

A makeshift school of community centres and a Knights of Columbus hall opened Tuesday for grades seven to 11. They named it the Kahnawà:ke Survival School, which is still open today. “You have to control the education if you want your people, your culture [and] your language to survive,” he said.

An active participant with the United Nations on indigenous rights since 1987, Deer served as the Chairman and Rapporteur of the UN Workshop on Indigenous Media in New York in December 2000. Throughout the talk, Deer spoke of sovereignty and self-determination, defining it as freely pursuing social and economical development. A freedom he said Bill C-33 isn’t the answer for.

“Everything is theirs and they’re just allowing us to use it,” Deer said about Canada’s allocation of money and land to Aboriginal communities.

Obomsawin echoed Deer’s sentiments, saying that the biggest crime of the education system was that they taught Canadian history.

A documentarian of Abenaki descent, Obomsawin was born in New Hampshire but grew up in Quebec. Her upbringing on colonized land led to feelings of humiliation as classroom teachers taught that her language was the devil’s.

“They succeeded in making a lot of our people look so bad and so inferior,” she said. “Whenever I would go there as a young girl, I knew I was going to a very dangerous place.”

Unlike Deer, Obomsawin said she’s excited at the future under the Bill C-33 while acknowledging much debate is still to be had. She referenced the prophecy predicting that the seventh generation removed from 1960 would finally decolonize their people and restore freedom. 1960 is the year that Canada allowed Aboriginal peoples to vote without renouncing their status under the Indian Act.

“This is now; it is happening now,” she said about today’s youth fulfilling the prophecy. “I have never seen young people so sure and so strong about where they’re going.”

“It’s so strong and so beautiful that I cannot be discouraged.”

A last minute replacement, Lindsay Morcom was not ill-prepared to discuss her experiences researching and teaching Aboriginal linguistics at Queen’s University. Of Métis descent—which is a mix of First Nation and European ancestry—she compared the current Aboriginal rights movement to Gay rights activism. Having settler allies is as important to decolonization as heterosexuals advocating for same-sex marriage equality, she argued.

Morcom added that decolonization is a process that involves everyone. “Decolonization is not an Aboriginal one, it’s a Canadian one,” she continued. The full impact of colonization is often missed by many Canadians who fail to recognize that greater diversity exists between Canadian First Nation communities than in Europe, she said.

“If we came up with a Europe education act that is going to educate Ukranians like they educate British kids, people would think we’re crazy,” she added.

Direct Link: <http://thelinknewspaper.ca/article/6612>

First Nations adult literacy class expected to grow

Hope for expansion into math as well

[Lexi Baines](#) / The Citizen

January 29, 2015 12:00 AM

Jan. 6 was the first day for the adult literacy class for First Nations Adults at the Friendship Centre (Hiiye'yu Lelum). It was a small group to start with but they are anticipating that it will grow to 17-18 adults.

The first class was earlier in January. Adult Ed's David Bellis is thrilled with the idea.

These are young adults that have not traditionally come to the adult learning centre nor yet to other programs.

It's a reaching out to a new group and they're hoping to be able to expand it to numeracy and other subject areas once they hook them, Rhodes said.

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<http://www.cowichanvalleycitizen.com/news/first-nations-adult-literacy-class-expected-to-grow-1.1747392#sthash.PgC0aUUU.dpuf>

Elders helping build leaders

By Kerry Benjoe, The Leader-Post January 31, 2015



Rachel Janze, program co-ordinator for the University of Regina's Aboriginal Student Centre, and elder Noel Starblanket, part of the Neekaneewak Leadership Initiative to enhance cultural awareness and develop leadership skills.

The University of Regina has taken another step in its pursuit to indigenize its campus.

It may have taken two years to develop, but Rachel Janze, program co-ordinator for the University of Regina's Aboriginal Student Centre, couldn't be happier with the Neekaneewak Leadership Initiative (NLI).

"It's based on the principle that we needed to do more for our students than just support them academically," she said. "We need to do more to support our students so that they can be successful in their programs."

The NLI is an elder-based leadership program designed to enhance cultural awareness and develop leadership skills in students through traditional methods. It is headed by a leadership team comprised of elders, alumni, senior students and student support partners who are to provide culturally relevant programming, mentoring opportunities and leadership opportunities for U of R students. "We are looking at trying to develop a program that's based on reciprocal learning," said Janze. "What it does is it creates that purpose and meaning within each one of us that we all have something to contribute." She said the students have responded enthusiastically.

In October, two dozen students indicated they were interested in the initiative and wanted to stay involved in events.

Since that time, the number of interested students has multiplied.

Last week at a Neekaneewak event, 82 students participated, which did not surprise Janze.

She said the best part is having elders Noel Starblanket and Pat Sparvier at the centre.

Starblanket joined the centre in August and is enjoying the time he gets to spend with the students. He said it's important to support the students because he knows it's not an easy life.

"I remember being here when they had only two buildings here," said Starblanket. "I took my senior matriculation here and feeling so alone and isolated. I wish that there was something here like this at that time. It wasn't to be, but now it's here. I'm really appreciative of everyone who pitches in and works and does everything they can do for these students."

He said it's great to see the university take the steps to include aboriginal students.

"It's a really terrific atmosphere," said Starblanket. Not only has he become a favourite among the students and the staff at the centre, other departments angle for his time.

On Friday, Starblanket attended a luncheon hosted by the U of R engineering department at the student centre.

Janze said to have departments come to the centre to meet the students and spend time in the students' space does a lot for the students.

She said bridges are being built every day and said the more inclusive they can make the university for aboriginal students, the more inclusive it becomes for everyone and in the end everyone benefits because it is a sharing of knowledge and culture.

The U of R Aboriginal Student Centre is located in Room 108 in the Research and Innovation Centre.

Janze said the centre welcomes all students.

Direct Link:

<http://www.leaderpost.com/life/Elders+helping+build+leaders/10776431/story.html>

Dare to Dream: lawyers inspire aboriginal kids to pursue legal careers

Mock-trial educational program puts students at the First Nations School in court, in a good way — as prosecutors, defence lawyers, jurors and even security.



Grade 7 student Tyrone Maud, 12, sits on the witness bench, an eagle feather in hand, next to Justice Harry LaForme, the first appellate court judge in Canada of aboriginal background, during the mock trial.

By: [Patty Winsa](#) News reporter, Published on Sun Feb 01 2015

The first reaction from students at the First Nations School of Toronto to the idea of a mock criminal trial was eye-rolling and objection.

But on Friday, after a month of preparation, the initially nervous and shy students breezed through the criminal proceedings, playing individual roles as Crown prosecutors, defence lawyers, jurors and even court security.

“On the final day they’ve done wonderfully. They’ve done so well,” said Caitlyn Kasper, a staff lawyer with Aboriginal Legal Services of Toronto. “They didn’t want to speak in front of a group. It took them a very long time.”

The program, called Dare to Dream, was organized by Canadian Lawyers Abroad, a non-profit charity that holds the event in hopes of helping to transform the perceptions aboriginal youth, aged 11 to 14, may have of the justice system, where First Nations youth are vastly overrepresented.

Aboriginal girls account for one of every three jail admissions to a provincial facility for female youth, according to data obtained through a freedom-of-information request and [published in the Star](#).

That figure is 10 times higher than their proportion of the province's youth population. Aboriginal boys make up 15 per cent of male youth in jail, but account for only 3 per cent of boys, which means they are overrepresented in jail by a factor of five.

"Those are the percentages. There's no getting around the statistics," said Kasper, who spent four years working as a lawyer in Kenora, where she says aboriginal people make up 90 per cent of the adult jail population.

A judge recently allowed a [lawsuit brought by Megan Anoquot](#) against the Toronto Police Services Board and four officers to proceed. It includes allegations that her level-three strip search was the result of systemic discrimination, owing to the over-representation of First Nations people in the justice system. That imbalance was called a "serious crisis" by former Supreme Court justice Frank Iacobucci in a 2013 report.

An aboriginal youth is more likely to go to jail than to graduate from high school, according to statistics from the Assembly of First Nations.

"We see this as a critical time period," said Brittany Twiss, executive director of the lawyers' group. "Not only are they learning about their rights, and the consequences of their actions, but hopefully having a positive experience with the justice system before a negative one."

The event started in Toronto in 2012, and has spread to Ottawa, Calgary and the Siksika Nation in Alberta, as well as Saskatoon.

Volunteer lawyers and law students mentor students for an hour and a half each week, beginning in October. The students will get a chance to spend more time with lawyers on a trip to a big Bay Street law firm and another day touring the court of appeal, as well as other events.

"I think it's over that period of time, and through those relationships, that we really are transforming their perceptions," said Twiss. "Many of these kids were really skeptical about the program in the beginning. You can see it. And over time — you can see them today in their robes — they're completely into it."

Judge Harry LaForme, who presided over the mock trial, hopes the program will not only change perceptions, but inspire some of the students to pursue law.

LaForme, who belongs to the Mississauga of New Credit — where his brother is chief — was the first First Nations person appointed to an appellate court in Canada and the first in the Commonwealth.

“And 11 years later, when I thought we had broken that ceiling, and maybe more would happen, sadly it hasn’t,” LaForme told the kids. “I’m still the only First Nations on the Court of Appeal in the Commonwealth.

“And when I sit here, and watch how hard you work, I keep thinking to myself that one of you will be the second, because you sure have the skill to do it,” he continued.

“Every time I walk away from here I think: *Yes*. It really is my favourite thing that I do all year long. I say that because of you guys. You work so hard at it, and you make me so proud.”

Direct Link:

<http://www.thestar.com/news/gta/2015/02/01/dare-to-dream-lawyers-inspire-aboriginal-kids-to-pursue-legal-careers.html>

Aboriginal Achievement Week launches today

By Jeremy Warren, The Starphoenix February 2, 2015

Tenille Campbell wants more indigenous women to start telling stories about sex and relationships.

"Positive sexual narratives for indigenous women are hard to come by," said Campbell, a University of Saskatchewan graduate student who helped organize an event for Aboriginal Achievement Week, which starts today.

"In the media, you're either Pocahontas or a whore. Talking about sex in a positive and healthy way is rare."

Campbell, a member of the English River First Nation, is performing with several other artists on Feb. 4 at Bring on the Heat!, one of 26 events scheduled for the week. The theme is "irreverence," as in using humour and words to push against boundaries, Campbell said. It's also a judged competition.

"All of us are highly competitive and we're already talking trash to each other," she quipped.

Aboriginal Achievement Week started in the late 1990s and has become a large event for the U of S, which has seen its aboriginal enrolment steadily increase in recent years. This year's events range from art showcases, live performances, lectures and academic scholarship.

"Events like this where we can gather and push for that indigenous presence are great," Campbell said. "We're showing students what we can do, showing non-indigenous students we're more than just our mukluks."

Bring on the Heat! starts at 3:30 p.m. on Feb. 4 at Convocation Hall. Other highlights include Tuesday's science and engineering events, including one about sustainable development in aboriginal communities; two talks by recent Winnipeg mayoral candidate

Robert-Falcon Ouellette on Wednesday; a student awards ceremony on Thursday; and Friday's talk about indigenous leadership in medicine and nursing.

The annual achievement week is a chance for students, staff and faculty to change a narrative too many people ignore, said Graeme Joseph, team leader for First Nation, Metis and Inuit student success at the Aboriginal Student Centre.

"We talk about aboriginal students going to postsecondary education and often the conversation is framed very negatively - there aren't a lot of aboriginal students going to university or students facing challenges culturally and financially," Joseph said. "One thing we often seem to forget is the narrative around student success and coming to university and doing really great things, not only in terms of their academic achievements but in giving back to their community."

Put simply, the achievement week is about the aboriginal students, staff and faculty who help enrich campus life and the city, Joseph said. "This is an opportunity to celebrate them and their successes," Joseph said. "We have some really great people doing important work in the community."

The week ends Friday with a round dance in the Education Gym from 4 p.m. to 2 a.m. Visit aboriginal.usask.ca for a full schedule and details of events this week.

Direct Link:

<http://www.thestarphoenix.com/life/Aboriginal+Achievement+Week+launches+today/10779834/story.html>

Making community connections key to student success in remote First Nations

Teaching practices need to be culturally relevant according to Lakehead University researcher

[CBC News](#) Posted: Feb 05, 2015 12:00 PM ET Last Updated: Feb 05, 2015 2:55 PM ET



Melissa Oskineegish is a researcher at Lakehead University, who also taught in a northern First Nation. (supplied)

When Melissa Oskineegish went up north to teach in a First Nations community she felt fully prepared for her new role.

As a first time teacher she based the lessons for her Grade 7 and 8 class on what she'd learned in the teacher education program.

Oskineegish wanted to do well for her students, but she said within the first week of classes she realized her students weren't learning.

"They were not connecting to the lessons that I was making, they were not connecting to the instructions I was giving [...] I kind of had to just stop and say what am I doing wrong here, you know, I'm doing everything that I was taught," she said.

When she took a step back she realized she was not connecting the lessons to the community, said Oskineegish, who is now a Ph.D. student in education at Lakehead University.

"I was developing lessons from the curriculum, using curriculum resources that were all urban based."

To make that connection Oskineegish incorporated the lessons students learned during culture week, a one week excursion on the land where young people go out and learn about hunting and fishing.

"They came back and they wanted to share with me the stuff that had happened to them, some of them were funny, some of them were serious, some of them were interesting and so we created a space where they could share their stories," she said.

Oskineegish said she implemented those life lessons into the language/arts curriculum by having her students contribute to a newsletter that was shared with the whole community.

She said one of keys to success in teaching in a remote First Nations community is building relationships with your colleagues, students and their families, and getting to know the community.

Oskineegish said that means being an active member of the community.

Direct Link:

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/thunder-bay/making-community-connections-key-to-student-success-in-remote-first-nations-1.2945206>

Aboriginal Health

Winnipeg-area First Nation remains under 17-year boil water advisory



Josh Elliott, CTVNews.ca

Published Sunday, February 1, 2015 2:31PM EST

As clean water once again flows from taps in the city of Winnipeg, members of a nearby First Nation community say they remain under a boil water advisory that's been in effect for nearly two decades.

Some members of the Shoal Lake 40 First Nation were in Winnipeg earlier this week to protest their plight. Winnipeg recently lifted its three-day warning after water tests turned up negative for E.coli. But Shoal Lake residents say their water troubles have yet to be addressed.

Chief Erwin Redsky, of the Shoal Lake 40 First Nation, says his people are no closer to turning on their taps now than they were when their water supply was found to be contaminated in 1996.



A sign is held in Winnipeg on Jan. 29, 2015. Shoal Lake 40 First Nation, which provides Winnipeg with water through an aqueduct, has been under a boil-water advisory for 17 years.

Residents in the Shoal Lake community have been boiling their water or importing it from other towns on a weekly basis, even as a nearby aqueduct pumps drinkable water out to Winnipeg.

"It's very difficult," Redsky told CTV New Channel on Sunday. He added that there has been "no progress to date" with clearing up the issue.

The Shoal Lake 40 First Nation sits on a man-made island established in the early 1900s during the construction of the Winnipeg aqueduct.

Erwin says experts have examined the Shoal Lake water problem, but it's been deemed too expensive to fix.

"This should not be happening in (2015)," Redsky said. "All Canadians should have clean water to drink."

Winnipeg's boil water advisory lasted only a few days after a handful of tests showed possible traces of E.coli in the water supply. Later tests came back negative.

Read more:

<http://www.ctvnews.ca/canada/winnipeg-area-first-nation-remains-under-17-year-boil-water-advisory-1.2215763#ixzz3Qc7VmxYL>

Racism against aboriginal people in health-care system 'pervasive': study

Discrimination called a major factor in aboriginal health disparities

By Duncan McCue, [CBC News](#) Posted: Feb 03, 2015 5:00 AM ET Last Updated: Feb 03, 2015 12:22 PM ET

Michelle Labrecque pushes herself gingerly in a wheelchair down the hallway of a hotel. The Oneida woman was recently found to have a fractured pelvis, but she says it took three trips to the hospital and increasing pain before she received that diagnosis.

"The third time, I was just left in the ER room, not being able to walk anywhere. Nobody around to help me, not even to a wheelchair," says Labrecque.

She felt abandoned, she says, because she's native.

It wasn't her first bad experience at Victoria's Royal Jubilee Hospital. In 2008, she sought medication for what she describes as severe stomach pain. She discussed the pain with a doctor, as well as her struggles with alcohol and finding a home.

The doctor wrote her a prescription, and told her she was good to go. When she got home, she discovered all the doctor had scribbled on the prescription form was a crude drawing of a beer bottle, circled with a slash through it.

"It just blew my mind, what they put on it. It's discriminating against natives, I'm pretty sure," says Labrecque. She complained to the hospital, who told her the doctor was disciplined, though she never found out what happened to him.

'Unconscious, pro-white bias'

A new study suggests racism against aboriginal people in the health-care system is "pervasive" and a major factor in substandard health among native people in Canada.

The study — called First Peoples, Second Class Treatment — was released today by the Wellesley Institute, which researches public health issues.

"It bothers me that people think it's OK to pretend we don't have these issues in our own backyard," says Dr. Janet Smylie, a Métis doctor and lead author of the study.



Dr. Janet Smylie is lead author of the report titled First Peoples, Second Class Treatment. (CBC)

The study says well-documented disparities in aboriginal and non-aboriginal health are rooted in colonial government policies, such as segregation and Indian residential schools.

But Smylie says negative stereotypes about aboriginal people and an "unconscious, pro-white bias" among health-care workers continue to harm aboriginal health.

"Within the health-care context, unfortunately, the kind of unintentional implicit associations which lead to differential treatment are alive and well."

The study suggests aboriginal people experience racism from health-care workers so frequently that they often strategize on how to deal with it before visiting emergency departments, or avoid care altogether.

Avoidance strategies based on racism

That was the case for Carol McFadden. The 53-year old Oneida woman, living in Victoria, admits she's wary of the health-care system after witnessing her brother experience discrimination from doctors and nurses when he was ill.

"When you're sick, you're at your most vulnerable. You need somebody there to help you stave off those horrible comments, those horrible looks," says McFadden.

A few years back, a lump in her breast that was long ago diagnosed as a plugged milk duct started to feel unusual. When she visited a clinic, she says, the doctor told her she could check out mammography on her own, and needn't have come in.

This fall, McFadden returned to a hospital, to learn she had stage 4 breast cancer. She's now undergoing chemotherapy, but the cancer has spread to her liver.

'If I'm somebody with white skin, if I'm somebody that looks like ... their auntie, their grandmother, I don't believe they would treat me that way.'— *Carol McFadden*

Some doctors have been compassionate, she says, but others have been rude — kicking her bed when they want her attention, or asking if she drinks or does drugs. She hasn't had any alcohol for two decades.

"You go to a clinic, and they don't treat you as a human being. You're somebody that's wasting their valuable time, that they could be spending on somebody more deserving of the health-care system," says McFadden.

"If I'm somebody with white skin — if I'm somebody that looks like their relative, their auntie, their grandmother — I don't believe they would treat me that way."

Indigenous health solutions

In the study, Smylie recommends several solutions for dealing with racism in the health-care system, including more aboriginal health-care workers and "cultural safety" training for non-aboriginal health-care workers.

She also recommends aboriginal-specific health treatment programs.



St. Paul's Hospital in Vancouver recently open a 'Sacred Space' room for aboriginal healers, staff and patients. (Duncan McCue)

Staff at St. Paul's Hospital in Vancouver say the recently created "Sacred Space" room has made a huge difference for aboriginal patients, by incorporating traditional healing into what many feel is a daunting hospital setting.

"Having this room here says 'We welcome you, we welcome your family, we welcome your journey to healing and we're here to help you in any way possible,'" says Carol Kellman, the aboriginal nurse practice leader at St. Paul's.

Patients and staff join together weekly for talking circles, and traditional healers are welcomed to conduct aboriginal ceremonies.

James Raven, a 44-year old Cree man who is HIV positive, says the Sacred Space room transformed his healing journey. He visits the hospital at least once a week to get treatment for hepatitis C — treatment that now includes traditional aboriginal medicine.

"This space saved my life," says Raven. He points appreciatively at the healers who sit beside him in the circle. "I feel if it wasn't for Creator and these people here today, I would be pushing up daisies. And that's a fact."

Direct Link:

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/aboriginal/racism-against-aboriginal-people-in-health-care-system-pervasive-study-1.2942644>

First Nations patients with kidney disease part of new research

Researchers working on strategy to prevent pneumococcal infections in those with severe kidney disease

[CBC News](#) Posted: Feb 03, 2015 3:38 PM ET Last Updated: Feb 03, 2015 5:23 PM ET



A research team recently began a clinical trial of a new vaccine with renal patients at the Thunder Bay hospital. Aboriginal people have higher rates of pneumococcal infection than the general population. (IStock) 29 shares

A Northern Ontario School of Medicine professor is leading a team of researchers to find the best strategy to prevent severe pneumococcal infections in First Nations people with chronic kidney disease.

Pneumococcal infection is particularly common in people suffering from severe kidney disease. This type of infection can cause pneumonia, blood poisoning (sepsis) or, less commonly, meningitis.

“To prevent these serious conditions, everyone with severe kidney disease should be immunized against pneumococcal infection. However, even after vaccination, some people remain vulnerable,” said Dr. Marina Ulanova, NOSM Professor of Immunology.



A research team led by Thunder Bay Northern Ontario School of Medicine faculty member Dr. Marina Ulanova is developing a strategy to prevent severe pneumococcal infections in First Nations people suffering chronic kidney disease. (Supplied)

“The current vaccine, Pneumovax, is very efficient in building protective immunity in individuals with a normal immune system, but not in those with weakened immune systems, such as people with severe kidney disease.”

She said kidney disease often develops as a result of diabetes.

“People suffering from severe kidney disease have to be on hemodialysis or peritoneal dialysis therapy and eventually need to receive a kidney transplant,” she said.

“Kidney disease weakens the immune systems of these patients, causing them to be vulnerable to infections.”

To help determine the optimal vaccination strategy, Ulanova’s team of researchers have recently initiated a clinical trial of Prevnar13 in patients with severe chronic kidney disease receiving care through Renal Services at the Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre.

Their objective is to develop the optimal protocol for prevention of pneumococcal infection in this vulnerable patient population. As almost 50 per cent of the patient population in the hospital’s renal services are First Nations people, the research team is paying special attention to the effectiveness of this vaccine in people of aboriginal background.

According to a news release issued by NOSM on Tuesday, North American Aboriginal Peoples have higher rates of pneumococcal infection than the general population, but the specific reasons are uncertain.

“It is possible the immunization protocol may have to be adjusted to ensure everyone receives adequate protection,” Ulanova said. “We are confident that our research will

result in an optimal strategy to prevent severe infections in First Nations people suffering from chronic kidney disease.”

The research is being funded by a \$100,000 grant from Pfizer.

Ulanova has been working with co-investigator Dr. William McCready, NOSM professor of Internal Medicine and chief of staff at the Thunder Bay hospital.

Direct Link:

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/thunder-bay/first-nations-patients-with-kidney-disease-part-of-new-research-1.2943662>

Aboriginal History

Life & Times: Métis activist galvanized by early injustice

Bertha Clark 1922-2014

By Alicja Siekierska, Edmonton Journal February 1, 2015



Bertha Clark in 2007.

EDMONTON - When Bertha Clark received an honourable discharge from the Royal Canadian Air Force after the Second World War, she dreamed of starting a life in the Paddle Prairie Métis Settlement. She was entitled to a section of land, wanted to live at home, close to nature and more importantly close to her family.

Clark was devastated to learn that she could not own land within the settlement, simply because she was a woman.

“That just didn’t seem fair to her,” said Clark’s daughter Lynn. “She thought, ‘I went out and supported the country, I’m an independent woman and I have to come back and be treated as an inferior and not get the privileges other do.’ It wasn’t right.

“That just put the fight in her to stand up and have a voice.”

This rejection proved to be a turning point for the Métis woman and marked the start of a lifelong fight advocating for aboriginal women's rights in Alberta.

She died on Oct. 21 of a stroke, but her legacy of fighting for aboriginal rights lives on.

"She was definitely a fighter," Lynn said. "She fought to have acceptance ... and worked with helping to overcome a lot of the barriers and obstacles in terms of aboriginal children in the welfare system."

Clark was born on Nov. 6, 1922 in Clear Hills, Alberta. Her Métis family was the first to settle in the small community, located northwest of Peace River. The fifth of 14 children, Clark — then known as Bertha Houle — knew tough times all too well. Her family was frequently strapped for cash, and she had to help on the farm to make ends meet.

A fiercely patriotic woman, she joined the Canadian Forces when she was 18. She rose quickly in the ranks, becoming a corporal thanks to a tenacity that would become her trademark.

When she returned from the war and was forced to settle on land in Hawk Hills, she was reunited with George Clark, a war veteran whom she knew from her teens. The two married and eventually had six children. Although they had a happy marriage, Lynn said, they experienced many hardships through their time together.

The Clarks owned a small farm, one with no modern equipment where they toiled for years before it burned to the ground.

"We had lost everything," Lynn said. "Everything. My parents had to venture out and try to rebuild our life from scratch. Those were extremely difficult times, but they both had such great resiliency."

After the devastating fire, the family moved to Fort McMurray in the 1960s, and it wasn't long before Clark made her mark in the community. She helped establish an aboriginal Friendship Centre in town, which became a hub for people coming from the north looking for work. Clark also founded the Voice of Alberta Native Women's Society in 1968. At the time, she was concerned about discrimination against aboriginal women and scarce educational resources.

In the early 1970s, the group fought for the rights of aboriginal foster children, successfully petitioning the government for grants to help recruit foster parents within aboriginal communities. Clark continued her advocacy work, becoming the first president of the Native Women's Association of Canada.

Over the years, Clark also worked as a hairdresser, a receptionist, a school bus driver, a telephone operator, and a cook — often far away from her family.

Working away from her children was something Clark was always reluctant to do.

"(There were many) personal sacrifices my mother made as she ventured out into the world," Lynn said.

One of those sacrifices was giving up a daughter for adoption.

While with the Forces, Clark fell for an Australian Sergeant she affectionately referred to as Curly. After the war ended, Curly returned to Australia and Clark was left in Canada — alone, without the land she hoped to live on, and pregnant with Curly's child.

Unable to care for her on her own, Clark gave her daughter up for adoption. But that wouldn't be the last goodbye.

Fifty years later Linda Graham Jasper contacted the adoption agency so she could finally meet her biological mother. The two women, along with Clark's other children, were reunited in a Calgary hotel room.

It was a joyous occasion, said Lynn.

"One of the amazing things I remembered from that day was watching these two interact," she said. "Although she had not raised Linda, their expressions were so similar. Their characters were so similar. I sat back and looked at them in awe."

Jasper kept in touch with the Clark family, even after Bertha's death.

Clark was awarded the Diamond Jubilee Award, Order of Canada, and Queen's Golden Jubilee Award for not only her services with the Armed Forces, but her years of fighting for aboriginal rights.

"She always shook her head whenever she received an award," Clark said. "It wasn't that she wasn't grateful. She'd always say. 'I didn't do this alone. There are so many of us working for this.'"

"When she saw an injustice, she had the courage and bravery to speak in a diplomatic and assertive way. She never had any hostility or meanness. She just wanted change."

Direct Link:

<http://www.edmontonjournal.com/Life+Times+M%C3%A9tis+activist+galvanized+early+injustice/10775561/story.html>

Aboriginal Identity & Representation

Indigenous 101: A cultural Q&A

CBC Manitoba's Information Radio hosted some frank talk for a better future

By Donna Carreiro, [CBC News](#) Posted: Jan 30, 2015 5:30 AM CT Last Updated: Feb 02, 2015 10:16 AM CT



More indigenous people live in Winnipeg than any other Canadian city. (Jillian Taylor/CBC)

It's been a week since Maclean's magazine got all of Canada talking about racism in Winnipeg.

Through the fallout and debate it generated, one thing resonated loud and clear: Education is essential in any effort to end racism.

That's why Friday morning on CBC's *Information Radio*, host Marcy Markusa hosted "Indigenous 101" — an interactive Q&A where we asked you, "What would you like to know about indigenous people? What are the questions you're afraid to ask but really want the answers to?"



James Wilson, Treaty Commissioner of Manitoba, and indigenous educator Tasha Spillett answer your questions in Indigenous 101.

In studio to answer those questions were Manitoba Treaty Commissioner James Wilson and high school teacher Tasha Spillett, who specializes in Indigenous education.

Here now is a sampling of what you asked and what our panel answered with:

Q: "Do aboriginal people get paid to go to university?"

Jamie: That's a really good question. Under the umbrella of aboriginal or indigenous, there's different groups, Métis, Inuit. Some First Nations people do get sponsored to go to university. The federal government puts aside \$300 million a

year for First Nations post-secondary students in Canada. It's a limited amount, it's had a hugely positive impact, but it's highly competitive to access that. Most communities have waiting lists, and you have to maintain a GPA (grade point average).

Marcy: So the impression that every aboriginal person that I see on campus is paid to be there ... is completely wrong?

Tasha: I know for myself, I paid for every single course through my university career, including now in my grad studies.

'I paid for every single course through my university career.' - Tasha Spillett, high school teacher

And I also want to recognize the indigenous students who are on campus, who deal with this question almost daily. A vast majority of our students are finding other resources to pay for our tuition.

Q: "My uncomfortable question is why after generations of throwing money at 'the aboriginal file' do things appear to not get any better? ... Please understand that I am not talking about "throwing money" at the micro (program) level. I helped to fund programs at the aboriginal youth level for years. While I saw some progress in the short term, I have no idea about the long-term outcomes.... My question stands; is money the answer?"

Jamie: If we're talking about "on reserve" specifically, First Nations are governed under the Indian Act. Now, the Indian Act is probably the most repressive, economically speaking, piece of legislation there is. If Canada as a country had to do business under the Indian Act, we'd be a Third World country. It prevents long-term investment, it creates dependency on the government, it creates basic cash economies instead of long-term wealth developments, and it's hard to break out of that.

That being said, a lot of the solutions we're talking about don't require money. A really good example would be urban reserves in Manitoba. We have the Kapyong case — 160 acres of land that's sitting dormant. Education issues. A lot of these things don't take money to do. Healing a relationship just can't happen through money. It takes personal investment and a lot of these things we could do without money.

Q: I'm wondering why do the great-grandchildren have to be responsible for the sins of their great-grandparents?

Tasha: Well, we've all inherited, indigenous and non-indigenous, the stories and experiences of our grandparents, for better or for worse. We know that no one is going anywhere ... and we need to figure out how to move forward. We have a collective inheritance and we also have to decide, "What is our legacy? What are we going to leave for our grandchildren?"

But I understand that people sometimes feel that they're locked in guilt. And guilt is very paralyzing ... and I know sometimes people come from a place of not

understanding, which leads to feeling really uncomfortable and sometimes angry. But if we get stuck there, we're not doing any service for our children.

'I think it would be a mistake for us to blame and shame people.'- *James Wilson, Treaty Commissioner of Manitoba*

Jamie: As First Nations people, I think it would be a mistake for us to blame and shame people. And I've seen this happen where you blame and shame white people. That's kind of one approach, and it ends up entrenching people in their positions.

Justice [Murray] Sinclair, I heard him say one time that "if you want to get somebody from their position to your position, you walk to where they are, you take them by the hand, and then you walk them to where you are." So in building a relationship, you can't just simply attack all the time. You've got to educate people respectfully.

Q: What do treaties have to do with it?

Jamie: To me, the treaties have to do with everything. Treaty rights are something that everybody in Manitoba has. As an example, if you own property in Winnipeg, that's based on a right that was guaranteed through Treaty One. It goes all the way back to the Royal Proclamation.

Now, First Nations people have really had to fight for those rights, because a lot of individual and collective rights through the early 1900s were taken away step by step: the right to vote, the right to own property, the right to assemble, the right to go to ceremonies. All these things were taken away and we had to fight to get them back.

Q: If I buy gas in Scanterbury on the way down to Grand Beach, they ask me if I have a treaty card. What would a treaty card get me?

Tasha: Your treaty card would get you a gas rebate in Scanterbury.

Jamie: First Nations have certain rights to collect certain taxes in their communities with their own band members. Some communities will give that rebate directly to the band members. Other communities will collect it and put it into the general revenue.

Q: Do you pay taxes?

Jamie: Yes. I pay taxes and everybody in my family pays taxes. I get asked that question all the time.

'I pay taxes and everybody in my family pays taxes. I get asked that question all the time.'- *James Wilson*

And it's a good question because there are specific instances when status Indians, under the Indian Act, don't pay taxes. But it's very specific to on-reserve purchases, on-reserve employment where the services are provided on-reserve. It's very specific.

Tasha: I definitely do pay taxes, and so do all my relatives.

Q: The perception that indigenous people don't pay taxes, what does that do to our relationship?

Tasha: I think blanket statements are really dangerous. If we're making blanket statements about any one of our fellow citizens, we really need to look at that critically and think about where did these statements come from and how can we find the truth about where those statements come from?

Direct Link:

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/indigenous-101-a-cultural-q-a-1.2937088>

RCMP investigate Facebook call for 'open season' on First Nations



A magnifying glass is posed over a monitor displaying a Facebook page. (AP / Joerg Koch)

The Canadian Press

Published Friday, January 30, 2015 11:54AM EST

TERRACE, B.C. - Terrace RCMP are investigating allegations that a hate crime was committed when someone posted a racist tirade on Facebook declaring "open season" on First Nations people.

The comments appear to have come from a local man's Facebook account and were a response to a recent [Terrace Standard](#) news article.

The newspaper's blocking software quickly removed the comment but not before a screenshot was taken and posted on a Facebook page belonging to [West Coast Native News](#).

The screenshot has been shared more than 1,500 times and appears to show a comment that says the "only good Indian is a dead Indian" and "let's have open season on 'em."

RCMP Const. Angela Rabut says Mounties are now looking into it, but she adds it's unfortunate that negative comments attract so much attention and spread so quickly.

She says the Terrace detachment has been getting complaints about it from as far away as Saskatchewan.

Read more:

<http://www.ctvnews.ca/canada/rcmp-investigate-facebook-call-for-open-season-on-first-nations-1.2213519#ixzz3Qc690heC>

Winnipeg falls behind province for hiring women, aboriginal people

[CBC News](#) Posted: Feb 04, 2015 12:10 PM CT Last Updated: Feb 04, 2015 12:11 PM CT



The City of Winnipeg lags behind the Manitoba government when it comes to hiring people from diverse backgrounds. (Meaghan Ketcheson/CBC)

Over the last three years, the City of Winnipeg has continued to hire more employees from diverse backgrounds. But when it comes to women and people of aboriginal descent, it lags behind the provincial government.

The Citizen Equity Committee presented its findings to the city's executive policy committee on Wednesday. It found in 2013-14, city public service employees identify themselves as follows:

- 29.8 per cent women
- 8.5 per cent aboriginal
- 9.9 per cent visible minorities
- 5.1 per cent persons with disabilities

According to a 2014 report, the province appears to be doing a better job with diversity. The report says provincial government employees break down into 54.5 per cent women and 13.8 per cent aboriginal.

The city report says since 2011, three groups have seen marginal increases, while the number of persons with disabilities is down 0.3 per cent.

Direct Link:

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/winnipeg-falls-behind-province-for-hiring-women-aboriginal-people-1.2944834>

Young natives getting pride back, new Assembly of First Nations chief says

By [Joelle Kovach](#)

Tuesday, February 3, 2015 11:40:25 EST PM



Assembly of First Nations Chief Perry Bellegarde talks to reporters at Traill College's Kerr House prior to a lecture presented by North at Trent 2015 lecture series Saskatchewan First Nations and the Province's Resource Future held at Trent University's Science Complex Room 137 in Peterborough on Tuesday, Feb. 3, 2015. Clifford Skarstedt/Peterborough Examiner/QMI Agency

Assembly of First Nations national Chief Perry Bellegarde says he's noticing a welcome change in his people lately.

They're attending more traditional ceremonies that they used to, he says - especially the younger people.

Bellegarde, 52, was elected AFN chief in mid-December. He says the Indian Act of 1876 - the one that wouldn't allow First Nations people to vote until 1961 - also banned gatherings such as sunrise ceremonies and potlaches.

It also made native people feel that their ceremonies were somehow shameful, Bellegarde said, and it's taken generations for that to turn around. But now it's changing.

"More of our people are coming back to our ceremonies - and they're getting that pride back," he said.

Bellegarde was in Peterborough on Tuesday to speak as part of a free public lecture series on the main campus.

The event was sponsored by the Canadian studies and the indigenous studies departments at Trent.

Bellegarde, who grew up in Saskatchewan, was expected to lecture about how First Nations in his home province are feeling about the future of the natural resources there.

But he says that discussion is made even more interesting by the recent Supreme Court ruling that aboriginals still own their ancestral lands unless they signed away their rights in treaties.

It's a landmark ruling that has vast implications for the natural resources in those lands, Bellegarde says.

"From a First Nation perspective, it means we need to be involved," he said. "It's about getting indigenous people involved in the economy."

He doesn't mean indigenous people want to stop development, he says - his people simply want to ensure that water and land is preserved.

They also want to ensure that their own people's reserves offer decent living conditions, he said, noting that some reserves don't even have access to potable water.

Bellegarde said one of the first steps is going to be to talk to the country's premiers individually and lobby for them to get more aboriginal leaders involved in decision-making.

Premier Kathleen Wynne has already met with a number of aboriginal leaders, Bellegarde said.

"I'm encouraged by that - I'm asking them to formalize that," he said.

Meanwhile Bellegarde says he's seeing his people slowly return to their ceremonies.

It encourages him, although he says more healing has to take place between white and non-white Canadians.

How do you promote that?

"You talk," he says. "You invite us to dinner."

Although he smiles when he says it, he's not being facetious. He means that strengthening relationships between First Nations and their fellow Canadians can help with that healing he's looking for.

Bellegarde also says it's encouraging to see his people rejecting stereotypes, such as the idea that indigenous people are somehow dumb.

More and more First Nations people are graduating from university these days, and Bellegarde says it's a sign these stereotypes are breaking down: "That's hope, when you see that happening."

Direct Link:

<http://www.thepeterboroughexaminer.com/2015/02/04/young-natives-getting-pride-back-new-assembly-of-first-nations-chief-says>

Skwomesh language revitalized by First Nation youth through DIY immersion

'Language House' driven by youth determined to revive dying language

By Duncan McCue, [CBC News](#) Posted: Feb 04, 2015 11:00 AM ET Last Updated: Feb 04, 2015 2:28 PM ET



From left, Joshua Watts, Khelsilem and Jaymyn La Valle often speak Skwomesh while preparing and eating meals together at Language House. (CBC/Duncan McCue)

A trio of 20-somethings is carving pot roast, in a typical-looking kitchen in a typical-looking apartment in North Vancouver.

But conversation here is unlike anywhere else in the world.

"a stl'i7 u kwi stakw?" asks Khelsilem, as he heaps potatoes on a plate for his sister, Jaymyn La Valle.

"en stl'i7 kwi stakw," replies Joshua Watts — pointing to a water glass.

Welcome to Language House: a do-it-yourself immersion experiment driven by youth determined to learn and revive Skw̓xwú7mesh sníchim or in English — the Skwomesh language. (The 7 represents a glottal stop or a slight pause.)

Skwomesh language 'endangered'



Khelsilem, middle, black headband, launched his blog, www.squamishlanguage.com, to teach Skw̓xwú7mesh sníchim using podcasts and YouTube videos. (Kris Krug)

The trio moved in together last autumn after the 25-year-old Khelsilem (his traditional Skwomesh name) put a call out to his fellow Squamish Nation members asking who would like to devote themselves to learning their ancestral tongue — by living with him in an immersion-like setting, instead of attending a weekly class.

"You can take a French class in high school and get straight As, but not be able to have a conversation in French," says Khelsilem.

"In Language House, we ask: can you actually communicate? You have to learn to communicate these things with each other in the house, daily."

The Squamish Nation has a population of 4,000 members with a vast traditional territory that ranges from North Vancouver to the city of Squamish, 64 kilometres north of Vancouver.

But a 2014 report on the status of B.C. First Nations languages listed *Skwxwú7mesh sníchim* as "critically endangered," with only seven remaining fluent speakers.

"If we don't pull together and put in work, there aren't going to be any speakers left. I don't want my language to die," says La Valle.

About five per cent of community members are considered language learners. Their options for learning are limited to Skwomesh classes in local elementary and high schools. There are also evening classes for adult learners, which are university-accredited but sporadic. The precarious nature of his community's language makes Khelsilem question how effective classroom learning is.

"We're getting our ass kicked. You have language courses getting funded pretty substantially for the last 20 to 30 years, and they haven't made a dent in this issue. When it comes to language revitalization, we need to have conversations about how we're actually going to move the yardstick – or get out of the game."

Crowd-funded language learning

A notable feature of Language House is that the young residents didn't seek any government funding to start or run the program.

"I didn't want to wait anymore," says Khelsilem. "If you look at where language funding comes from and how often it dries up because government priorities change, we get capped off at the knees. I want to demonstrate that you can build a language program without government funding."

The roommates share the \$2,350 monthly rent for their three-bedroom apartment.

"If our languages die and go extinct, our ability to interpret our inherent rights and responsibilities as indigenous people will be severely limited."- *Khelsilem, founder of Language House*

Last fall, they raised \$2,700, selling a Skwomesh language T-shirt in a crowd-sourced online campaign. They used those donations to buy dishes, cutlery, furniture and other household goods for Language House.

Once settled into their new home, the trio started beginner language lessons, taught by Khelsilem. La Valle, 23, had taken language classes in school, but Watts, 20, only knew "baby talk" and admits being nervous.

"I don't really know a whole lot of the language. Maybe it's not gonna make a whole lot of sense, and I'm gonna talk funny," said Watts, who is of Nuu-chah-nuulth ancestry but grew up in Squamish.

"Learning the language is probably one of the most time-consuming things you can do. But if you want to learn, you have to make the commitment."

Carving out practice time is a challenge, as all three lead busy lives. Khelsilem is a self-employed language and PR consultant; Watts and Lavallee are both students in environmental sciences at Simon Fraser University.

They try to set aside time twice a week to prepare and eat meals together, during which Khelsilem leads conversations in Skwxwú7mesh sníchim. They also phone each other daily, practising set conversations in the language.

Other language learners sometimes join them for social gatherings specifically to speak Skwxwú7mesh sníchim. They also invite elders to drop by for talks.

"I live with people that I can actually share language with, rather than learning the language at classes, then going home and not being able to speak to anybody," says La Valle.

Dreaming of language academy



The residents of Language House - Khelsilem, Jaymyn La Valle, Joshua Watts and skwemáy (dog) Lindy - speak Skwomesh every day in their North Vancouver apartment. (CBC/Duncan McCue)

Khelsilem, a semi-fluent speaker of Skwxwú7mesh sníchim, began learning from cassette tapes as a teenager. Once he became more proficient, he launched an online language blog in 2011, designed to reach and teach Squamish Nation members in any location with his self-designed podcasts and YouTube videos.

The residents of Language House recently revitalized the blog to promote their long-term dream: a Skwomesh Language Academy. It would be a full-time Skwxwú7mesh sníchim immersion program for adult learners.

"If our languages die and go extinct, our ability to interpret our inherent rights and responsibilities as indigenous people will be severely limited," Khelsilem says.

The academy was inspired by immersion programs run by other indigenous communities, such as successful efforts by fluent speakers of Kanien'keha (Mohawk language) to run immersion programs in various communities in Ontario, Quebec and New York state.

The trio hopes to launch the Skwomesh Language Academy in 2016, funded by donations.

"With monthly donations that amount to a cup of coffee a month ... we could change the entire course of our language's trajectory," says their website.

Direct Link:

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/aboriginal/skwomesh-language-revitalized-by-first-nation-youth-through-diy-immersion-1.2940513>

Aboriginal Inequality & Poverty

By the numbers: Conditions on Manitoba First Nations

By: The Canadian Press

Posted: 01/29/2015 1:04 PM | [Comments: 0](#) | Last Modified: 01/29/2015 1:05 PM

WINNIPEG - Documents from Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development show Manitoba is one of the worst places for First Nations people to live in Canada.

A look at conditions by the numbers:

8: Decreased number of years members of Manitoba First Nations can expect to live compared with other Manitobans.

28 per cent: Graduation rate for Manitoba First Nations children —the lowest in Canada.

29 per cent: Percentage of Manitoba's First Nations population living in homes in need of major repairs — the second-highest in the country.

33 per cent: Average welfare rate on Canadian reserves.

47 per cent: Average welfare rate on Manitoba reserves. The rate is 80 per cent on some reserves.

25 per cent: Percentage of First Nations children across Canada living in poverty.

62 per cent: Percentage of First Nations children in Manitoba living in poverty.

(Source: AANDC Manitoba updates 2012-2014)

Direct Link:

<http://www.winnipegfreepress.com/arts-and-life/life/health/by-the-numbers-conditions-of-n-manitoba-first-nations-290228051.html>

Aboriginal homeless drop-in centre loses bid for city funding

Shawenjeagamik Aboriginal Drop-In Centre at 510 Rideau St. to close March 31 after about 10 years

[CBC News](#) Posted: Feb 04, 2015 10:21 AM ET Last Updated: Feb 04, 2015 8:35 PM ET

A homeless drop-in centre for First Nations, Inuit and Metis people operated by the Odawa Native Friendship Centre is closing next month after its application for funding was rejected by the city.

The Shawenjeagamik Aboriginal Drop-In Centre at 510 Rideau St. has been in operation for about 10 years and will close on March 31.



The Shawenjeagamik Aboriginal Drop-In Centre at 510 Rideau St. will be closing on March 31. (Google Streetview)

"We ... have clients that are fighting to stay straight. They come here during the day because they don't want to be on the street," said Carrie Diabo, the co-ordinator at the drop-in centre. "We ... have some people that can't afford their own food after they pay their bills, so they'll come here for a meal."

The centre is funded by the city with money provided by the federal government.

About 18 months ago the federal government instituted new rules for funding breakdowns requiring 65 per cent of the money to go toward providing housing, according to Aaron Burry, the city's general manager of community and social services.

'We're ... making sure that they're housed first,' city says

"Rather than providing monies for people to stay on the streets, what we're actually doing is making sure that they're housed first," Burry said.

"Again, there's other programs in the city and our focus isn't actually to have people gathering in day programs, it's actually to put them into housing supports."

Diabo said the centre also helps aboriginal people with housing.

"We have those that do have housing, but they're by themselves so they'll come here for companionship," she told *Ottawa Morning* on Wednesday.

Overall funding for the community has not been cut, Burry said, adding that the centre's bid for funding wasn't competitive enough in the peer review process.

Still, the centre is calling on the city to reinstate the drop-in's funding.

Direct Link:

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/ottawa/aboriginal-homeless-drop-in-centre-loses-bid-for-city-funding-1.2944583>

Aboriginal Politics

National chief points to need to work together

Craig and Mark Kielburger, Special to QMI Agency

Saturday, January 31, 2015 2:00:00 EST AM



National chief of the Assembly of First Nations Perry Bellegarde is pictured in this handout photo. (Courtesy of Assembly of First Nations)

This is the first in a four-part series on Canada's aboriginal people and issues.

"Canada wasn't just founded by two nations, the French and English. First Nations opened their doors to our brothers and sisters when they came across the water."

This is a pointed reminder from Perry Bellegarde, newly-elected national chief of the Assembly of First Nations, that Canada's indigenous people want to be considered equal partners in the growth of this nation.

They are the fastest growing segment of the Canadian population, and as Bellegarde says bluntly, “It makes sense to invest in them.”

Bellegarde was elected in December by chiefs from across Canada and represents the almost one million First Nations citizens in this country. He takes over at what is arguably a historic tipping point for aboriginal issues in Canada.

Last year saw a landmark Supreme Court ruling on treaty rights, nationwide protests over development on aboriginal lands, outrage over the number of missing and murdered aboriginal women in this country, and a failed attempt to create a new First Nations education system.

We recently talked to Bellegarde about the key issues he wants to address as national chief.

Language is a highly personal issue for this leader. He told us he didn’t learn his ancestral Cree tongue until university and that profoundly impacted his sense of identity. Knowing their own language, he argues, is essential for First Nations children because “studies have shown that when a child is fluent in their indigenous language, they’re more successful in school and life.”

In this vein, Bellegarde wants to fix the 43% gap in education funding between aboriginal and non-aboriginal students. First Nations communities need equitable resources not just to build schools, Bellegarde says, but also to establish a system in which every First Nation community has control over its own education.

First Nations chiefs rejected education legislation last year because it was imposed without their input, according to Bellegarde. This means that creating an education system requires co-operation between the federal government and aboriginal people — and for the sake of youth living in First Nations communities, we hope they can find ways to work together.

Bellegarde also talked to us about the need for government and all citizens to see First Nations land claims and treaty rights as opportunities to partner together, not obstacles. In June 2014, the Supreme Court ruled federal and provincial governments must get the consent of aboriginal people before developing resources on their lands.

Bellegarde also believes revenue sharing in such resources is key to creating much-needed jobs to end poverty and despair in aboriginal communities. “When we win, everybody wins,” he says “because there is a huge cost to the socio-economic gap that exists.”

There are more issues on which we can work together. Many Canadians support the Assembly of First Nations’ call for a plan of action on missing and murdered aboriginal women. And we can ensure the stories of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission become part of history that all Canadians learn.

Bellegarde makes an interesting point that aboriginal issues in this country are not only aboriginal issues; they are Canadian issues.

Having communities living in third-world conditions, angry because they feel they’ve lost their cultural identity and their rights are trampled costs both our economy and our

social fabric. Addressing those problems will bring prosperity to our nation as a whole. That's what Bellegarde wants Canadians to realize.

"We're all in this together," he says. We agree — and let's start working together.

Craig and Marc Kielburger founded a platform for social change that includes Free The Children, Me to We, and the youth empowerment movement, We Day.

Direct Link:

<http://www.orilliapacket.com/2015/01/30/national-chief-points-to-need-to-work-together>

Pick up Ottawa's dropped ball: Oswald

Province may have to step in on aboriginal commitments, leadership candidate says

By: Larry Kusch and Bruce Owen

Posted: 01/31/2015 3:00 AM |



Sewage flows through a backyard in Wasagamack First Nation. (JOE BRYKSA / WINNIPEG FREE PRESS FILES)

If the federal government refuses to live up to its obligations to provide running water and adequate housing for First Nations people, the province should consider filling the void, Theresa Oswald says.

Oswald, one of three candidates vying for the leadership of the Manitoba NDP, was reacting Friday to a news report that portrayed Manitoba as one of the worst places for First Nations people to live in Canada.

The report said while 25 per cent of the children in Canadian First Nations communities lived in poverty, the rate was 62 per cent in Manitoba. It also spoke of up to 18 people sharing a three-bedroom bungalow in one northern community.

"These statistics are extremely alarming, but not a surprise to me having spent seven years as health minister and having worked really hard to lessen that gap between aboriginal and non-aboriginal people when it comes to health status," Oswald said following a campaign announcement.

In the past, Manitoba has crossed jurisdictional boundaries to provide kidney dialysis treatment in northern aboriginal communities and build roads linking First Nations. This spring, it is set to take over funding of band constables who assist the RCMP.

On Friday, Oswald took things a step further.

While she said it would be her "absolute preference" the feds "live up to their responsibilities" in ensuring communities had running water and adequate housing, she said the province should consider taking matters into its own hands if it has to.

"I reject that assertion that there is not much we can do (due to jurisdictional issues), because I fear that's the attitude that has been taken for decades," the Seine River MLA said. "And there will come a time when somebody is going to have to have the courage and the wherewithal to just say that we have to get it done -- whether that's a government-to-government relationship between First Nations and the province or the fiduciary relationship between First Nations and the Government of Canada."

Premier Greg Selinger and Aboriginal and Northern Affairs Minister Eric Robinson seemed less inclined to go down that road.

"We already do lots of partnerships with First Nations in Manitoba, and we will continue to do that, but we also want the federal government to live up to its responsibility and be part of the solution and not just let the provinces pick up the tab," Selinger said in Ottawa, while attending a first ministers meeting.

Robinson said the province shouldn't let the federal government off the hook on its treaty obligations. "But if we're asked to partner (with Ottawa), obviously we're there," he said.

Robinson said while it is "disgusting" to read reports of nearly 20 people being forced to share an average-sized home, it's not news to him.

"Canada has to realize that a country so rich, so full of opportunities, and First Nations are still relegated to having to live in these conditions, is disgraceful at best," he said.

In addition to poor housing stock, the sad condition of First Nations schools must also be addressed, Robinson said. Most are in dire need of repair or replacement, he said.

Robinson said Ottawa tends to go "into denial mode" when a newspaper report or the federal auditor general or a United Nations body points out the great economic disparities between First Nations people and other Canadians. Instead, everyone -- including the aboriginal leadership -- should "quit posturing" and get down to work to fix the problems on First Nations, he said.

NDP leadership candidate Steve Ashton also weighed in on the issue Friday, saying both levels of government must do more to address disparities in First Nations.

"I will make sure that this is a key issue for us on the national scale," Ashton vowed, should he become premier.

He noted the province has expanded post-secondary education through the University College of the North and formed partnerships with First Nations to build hydro dams.

-- with a file by Mia Rabson

Direct Link:

<http://www.winnipegfreepress.com/local/pick-up-ottawas-dropped-ball-oswald-290413921.html>

A successful day means aboriginal opportunity

Ted Hughes

Victoria — Contributed to The Globe and Mail

Published Monday, Feb. 02 2015, 3:00 AM EST

Last updated Monday, Feb. 02 2015, 10:30 AM EST

Ted Hughes is a retired judge who has led numerous child welfare inquiries.

There are reasons why aboriginal children are taken into the care of welfare agencies in grossly disproportionate numbers. That is a Canada-wide trend. In the past year in Manitoba, the percentage of children in care who are aboriginal has risen from 80 to 87 per cent. It's an alarming statistic.

There are reasons why aboriginal women and girls are much more likely to experience violence than their non-aboriginal counterparts, why they are substantially overrepresented among the ranks of the missing and murdered across the country.

There are reasons why aboriginal people are hugely overrepresented in Canada's prison population.

There are reasons why aboriginal people attain such lower rates of educational and employment achievement and why they lack opportunities for economic development.

It's time that Canadians, including their political leaders, come to appreciate what those reasons are, what results flow from them and what would realistically help bring the scales into balance, in order to give aboriginal people an equal chance to participate and succeed in mainstream society.

The reasons for the conditions above are rooted in the imposition of a foreign way of life on aboriginal people at the time of European occupation, commonly known as colonization. Another component was the residential school program, which brought misery to so many. There was also cultural dislocation and loss of identity, and segregation on what became known as reserves.

What have been the results? Widespread, large-scale poverty tops the list, associated with poor and inadequate housing conditions. Families struggle because attaining an acceptable standard of living simply isn't economically viable. Educational opportunities

are often deficient. Addictions can take hold. Social exclusion and isolation frequently follow.

What is the solution? There must be a sensible and achievable one, otherwise life will become increasingly uncomfortable for those of us who owe our presence on these lands to our immigrant forebears. The goal that must eventually be met is equality of opportunity for those disadvantaged by colonization and its results. To make that possible, the leaders of our national government, the provinces and territories and national aboriginal organizations must come together in the spirit of goodwill.

Indeed, that process has already begun.

First, last summer, the premiers named NWT Premier Bob McLeod and Manitoba Family Services Minister Kerri Irvin-Ross (assisted by B.C. Premier Christy Clark) to take the lead in seeking solutions to the disproportionate number of aboriginal children in care. Appropriate provincial and territorial ministers have agreed to participate, as have representatives of five national aboriginal organizations. Three working groups have been formed. Having reviewed and reported publicly on child welfare issues in British Columbia and Manitoba in recent years, I am encouraged by these events.

Secondly, a roundtable is being convened in Ottawa [on Feb. 27](#) to discuss murdered and missing aboriginal women and girls. This initiative is also an outgrowth of discussions at the premiers' meeting last year. Attending will be representatives from national aboriginal organizations, provincial and territorial leaders and families of victims. Federal ministers have been invited, too, and their participation and commitment is imperative. Mr. McLeod will chair the meeting. A steering committee to ensure a successful day is being led by national aboriginal organizations.

A successful day will be one that takes significant steps toward the ultimate achievement goal of equality of opportunity. That will entail the formulation of a strategy to bring an end to the poverty, inadequate housing, deficiency of educational opportunity and lack of economic viability mentioned above.

Only then will the overrepresentation of murdered and missing aboriginal women and girls and the violence they suffer be brought into balance. There is much at stake for all Canadians on Feb. 27.

Direct Link:

<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/globe-debate/a-successful-day-means-aboriginal-opportunity/article22729587/>

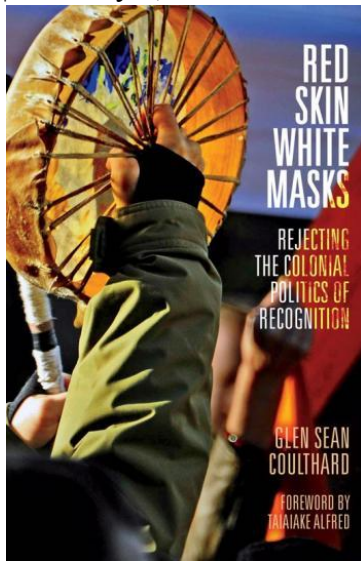
Capitalism must die in order for Indigenous nations to live

Canada's expansion of capitalism is contingent upon Indigenous land

By

[Kelly Rose Pflug-Back](#)

| February 5, 2015



Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition

by Glen Sean Coulthard
(University of Minnesota Press,
2014;
\$22.50)

"The master laughs at the consciousness of the slave," wrote Frantz Fanon. "What he wants from the slave is not recognition but work." Recorded in the footnotes of his influential work *Black Skin, White Masks*, this statement by the anti-colonial Algerian thinker was meant to refute Georg W.F. Hegel's famous philosophical concept of the dialectical relation between master and slave.

Over 60 years later, Yellowknives Dene scholar Glen Coulthard presents us with a renewed understanding of Fanon's relevance, this time in the context of a liberal-democratic settler state that occupies nearly one million square kilometres of Turtle Island: Canada.

In contemporary Canadian politics, the word recognition evokes progress for Indigenous nations and people through land claims processes and official gestures like Stephen Harper's 2008 statement of apology to residential school survivors.

Yet, just over a year after expressing condolences to survivors of Canada's genocidal policies, Prime Minister Harper publicly denied that Canada had any history of colonialism at all. Less than five years after the apology, the government passed Bill C-45, unilaterally undermining treaty rights and granting increased state access to Indigenous lands and resources.

Canada doesn't want a mutual relationship of recognition or reconciliation, proposes Coulthard. It wants land and resources.

Coulthard's book [*Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition*](#) begins by explaining how the liberal recognition paradigm in Canada came to replace the more overtly genocidal framework that preceded it.

Up until the federal government's introduction of their 1969 white paper, Canada's Indian policy employed explicit strategies of "exclusion and assimilation," including the reserve and residential school systems and the sexist provisions of the Indian Act that robbed Indigenous women of their rights to land and community. The eventual goal of these policies, says Coulthard, was the complete eradication of Indigenous peoples, if not physically, then "as cultural, political, and legal peoples distinguishable from the rest of Canadian society."

The rise of Red Power movements in the 1960s and 1970s forced Canada to mask its barefacedly colonial regime with a model centred upon claims of recognition, inclusion and reconciliation. *Red Skin, White Masks* is premised on the argument that this shift is not a progressive step toward Indigenous freedom and autonomy but rather an adaptation on the part of the colonial system. Overt assimilation is no longer acceptable, so the state has recast its genocidal goals in the palliative language of liberalism.

Coulthard rereads Marx in a settler-colonial context to identify how the expansion of capitalism in Canada is contingent upon ongoing questions of land rather than labour alone.

Land, Coulthard explains, is not only the foundation of all Indigenous life, culture and economics, but also a system of reciprocal relationships and a vehicle for learning how to practise egalitarian coexistence. This system of mutuality, which Coulthard terms "grounded normativity," calls into question the validity of Canada's land claims processes, since they presume the dominance of Canadian law over the self-determination of Indigenous peoples and impose a racist assumption of cultural superiority by reducing the complex relations between land and people into the language of property.

Shifting Marx's analysis from labour to land, explains Coulthard, does not refute the importance of class struggle, nor does it replace class with colonization as the root cause of all other oppression. Rather, it seeks to illuminate how ongoing colonial dispossession is integral to capitalist accumulation and inextricably linked to the oppression of other subordinated groups as well as non-human forms of life.

Coulthard gives great attention to the role of gender-based oppression within Canadian colonialism and the liberal politics of recognition, setting an important precedent that other male radical thinkers will hopefully follow.

In a detailed exploration of Canada's ongoing use of structural and direct violence against Indigenous women as a tool of colonialism, Coulthard eviscerates the liberal ideology that sets women's rights in opposition to collective rights or the self-determination of cultural groups. This zero-sum framework has been used not only by liberal feminists but also by Indigenous critics who wish to discredit the activism of women in their own groups as "untraditional."

While Coulthard doesn't altogether reject the use of legal mechanisms in service of the rights of Indigenous women, he forces us to question "the implications of turning to the

state as a protector of Indigenous women's rights if the state itself constitutes the material embodiment of masculinist, patriarchal power."

Like patriarchy, colonialism demands passivity and meekness on the part of the oppressed, a quiet endurance of continual abuse. These power relations delegitimize anger about injustice, framing it as irrational and pathological.

Within the recognition paradigm, Coulthard explains, anger and resentment toward the abusive settler state are perceived as dangerous and counterproductive tendencies to be placated through further state-facilitated reconciliation and institutional accommodation.

In the chapter "Seeing Red: Reconciliation and Resentment," Coulthard insists anger can be used to spur people to action when it is understood and harnessed appropriately. Like Fanon, Coulthard knows that emotions alone can't free an oppressed people but that understanding one's hatred of the oppressor can be a vital turning point through which oppressed groups externalize "that which was previously internalized." Righteous anger allows the oppressed to purge themselves of the negative self-concept that colonialism has so thoroughly ingrained into their being.

In place of the liberal politics of recognition, Coulthard calls for a resurgent politics of self-recognition. Drawing upon the work of Kanien'kehaka scholar Taiaiake Alfred and Anishnaabe feminist Leanne Betasamosake Simpson, Coulthard discusses a diverse array of collective and individual paths to self-affirmation and self-nurturing that Indigenous people are undertaking. These resurgent practices seek to render an asymmetrical relationship with the Canadian state irrelevant and obsolete.

Connections between diverse social and political movements are of central importance to Coulthard, who sees Indigenous struggles as necessarily linked to feminist, LGBTQ, ecological, labour and racial justice struggles, especially within an anti-capitalist framework. Connections between differing tactics are equally important, from the militant direct action of the warriors at Elsipogtog and other blockades to the creative works of Indigenous artists and intellectuals. The resurgence is well underway and ever growing.

Red Skin, White Masks is not only a landmark contribution to political theory, it is also a call to action. "For Indigenous nations to live, capitalism must die," concludes Coulthard. "And for capitalism to die, we must actively participate in Indigenous alternatives to it."

Kelly Rose Pflug-Back is an award-winning writer whose work has appeared in the Huffington Post, Toronto Star, CounterPunch, Canadian Woman Studies, Ideomancer, and The Feminist Wire. Her first book of poems, These Burning Streets, was published in 2012.

This review originally appeared on [Briarpatch Magazine](#) and is reprinted with permission.

Direct Link:

<http://rabble.ca/books/reviews/2015/02/capitalism-must-die-order-indigenous-nations-to-live>

Energy, the Environment & Natural Resources

Yukon First Nation leaders worried about impact of hydro dams

Yukon Development Corp. is reviewing 10 possible sites for hydro generation project

[CBC News](#) Posted: Jan 30, 2015 9:10 AM CT Last Updated: Jan 30, 2015 11:07 AM CT



Yukon First Nation leaders worried are about the environmental effects of potential hydro dams (The Canadian Press)

The Yukon Development Corporation is consulting with First Nations about the future of hydro development this week but there are concerns about potential impacts on communities.

The corporation is reviewing ten possible locations for a future hydro generation project. Some First Nation leaders are worried about how a hydro dam would affect their people.

Jerry Kruse, chair of the Selkirk Renewable Resource Council, feels uneasy about the ecosystem in the Yukon.

Fraser Falls, in Na-Cho Nyak Dun traditional territory, is one of the possible sites. Kruse says if there is hydro development, communities may never be the same.

"People live and always have through all generations along the river. So every part of the river that you flood, you're destroying all that history, tradition, culture, it's gone by the wayside."

Frank Patterson, chair of the Mayo Renewable Resource Council, says the current dam at Mayo has several problems.

He says the future of his people could be at stake if another dam is developed.

“Fraser Falls is near and dear to the First Nations heart. Traditionally, we as First Nations need our fish. It's in our food chain. We as First Nations have to plan ahead 35 to 50 years also because we've got our needs from the land.”

Patterson and other First Nation leaders think are alternatives to energy production that wouldn't involve flooding traditional lands.

He says planning ahead is good but traditional first nation land must be preserved.

"The Hess River is full of plants and moose and caribou and we really need the fish. So that's why I'm not really in for that specific area.”

The Yukon Development Corporation will continue to research and consult with First Nations before eventually making a recommendation to the government on possible hydro sites.

Direct Link:

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/yukon-first-nation-leaders-worried-about-impact-of-hydro-dams-1.2937666>

First Nations leaders highlight ‘massive need’ for reform in mining industry

Linda Givetash

VANCOUVER — The Globe and Mail

Published Tuesday, Feb. 03 2015, 4:40 PM EST

Last updated Tuesday, Feb. 03 2015, 4:43 PM EST

First Nations leaders say regulatory changes for the mining industry are needed to prevent a repeat of the Mount Polley tailings dam collapse.

Members of the Soda Creek Band, Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs and First Nations Summit want the provincial government to act quickly on [recommendations put forward last week](#) by an independent panel reviewing the disaster.

The panel found that design flaws contributed to the breaching of the dam in August 2014. The panel’s recommendations would ensure the use of better technology at future tailings facilities, a definitive response process to regulatory evaluations of facilities and improved safety guidelines.

“There is massive need for serious mining reform in British Columbia,” said Grand Chief Ed John of the First Nations Summit.

First Nations leaders said they are collaborating with the provincial government in response to the Mount Polley tailings dam breach.

Having signed a letter of understanding with the province, the Soda Creek Band and Williams Lake Band will have a say in determining future of the mine and the long-term impact the spill will have on the environment and surrounding communities.

“First Nations want to ensure that all the recommendations are implemented, not just some of them,” said Chief Bev Sellars of the Soda Creek Band.

Direct Link:

<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/british-columbia/first-nations-leaders-highlight-massive-need-for-reform-in-mining-industry/article22767733/>

Mount Polley Breach Report Faults Tailings Pond Design Flaws; First Nations Respond

[ICTMN Staff](#)

2/3/15

First Nations reacted with firm resolve to a report that found design flaws had led to a tailings pond breach at Mount Polley mine last August that sent four billion gallons of mining waste gushing into British Columbia salmon habitat.

A three-person panel convened by the B.C. government two weeks after the disaster “concluded that evidence indicates the dominant contribution to the failure resides in the design,” the [experts said in a statement](#) on January 30.

The experts said the design did not take into account the instability of sediment layers underneath the retaining wall, a failure likened to a “loaded gun,” according to [CBC News](#). The breach occurred when the embankment foundation failed in a layer of glacial sediment, the panel said in its statement. Making the slope of the embankment too steep was like “pulling the trigger” in causing the August 4 breach, CBC News reported. Moreover, the volume of water was not an issue when it came to the dam break, though it did influence the amount that flowed into the waterways, the report said.

The report was delivered to the Ministry of Energy and Mines, the T’xelc First Nation (Williams Lake Indian Band) and the Xat’sull First Nation (Soda Creek Indian Band). After taking the weekend to study the 150-page document, the indigenous leaders issued a measured but firm response.

“Safety has a price, and these companies have to quit taking shortcuts that prove disastrous,” said Williams Lake Indian Band Chief Ann Louie in a statement from the First Nations.

“While mining is an important industry and provides jobs for many it cannot be at the expense of the environment or public safety,” said Grand Chief Edward John from the First Nations Summit. “The best available technology (not the best practices standard) is required for existing and future mines instead of water/tailings storage and the use of lakes.”

The First Nations officials backed the panel’s recommendations for better mine safety and the provincial government’s vow to implement them, as well.

“The Government of B.C. has stated that they will take a leadership role to ensure an environmental crisis like Mt. Polley never happens again,” said Northern Shuswap Tribal Council Chief Maureen Chapman, a board member for the B.C. Assembly of First Nations, in the statement. “Not only will this mean implementing all of the Investigative Panel’s recommendations, but also committing to bold policy reforms which would see First Nations communities as partners in environmental regulation. The mining policy is one of many examples where First Nations are taking the lead by developing Nation-based regulations to govern resource activities on their traditional territories.”

The conclusions also reverberated in neighboring Alaska, where tribal and government leaders are advocating for more regulation in what they see as a lax environment in B.C.

Read more at

<http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2015/02/03/mount-polley-breach-report-faults-tailings-pond-design-flaws-first-nations-respond-159012>

Ontario First Nations demand NEB halt Energy East review, seek consultation

SHAWN McCARTHY - GLOBAL ENERGY REPORTER

OTTAWA — The Globe and Mail

Published Thursday, Feb. 05 2015, 4:21 PM EST

Last updated Thursday, Feb. 05 2015, 7:23 PM EST

Ontario’s First Nations leaders are demanding the National Energy Board halt its review of TransCanada Corp.’s Energy East project until they can be properly consulted.

In a letter to Natural Resources Minister Greg Rickford, Ontario regional chief Stan Beardy said First Nations have “grave concern” about the NEB process, saying the board has been inaccessible and unwilling to share information with them.

“The process is unable to discharge the duty to consult and accommodate, lacks transparency in decision making, and in contrary to the principle of free, prior and informed consent,” Mr. Beardy wrote in a letter released Thursday.

Aboriginal leaders have often turned to the courts when they believe they have not been properly consulted, and Mr. Beardy’s letter raises the odds that the Energy East proposal would face a legal challenge if approved by Ottawa.

TransCanada filed an application last fall for the energy board to approve the \$12-billion pipeline that would carry 1.1 million barrels a day of western crude to eastern refineries and export terminals. The company would convert portions of its natural gas mainline from Alberta to Quebec to carry crude, and build new pipe from the Ontario-Quebec border to the terminus at Saint John.

Both the company and the board have been consulting with First Nations, but Mr. Beardy said that effort has been insufficient. In an interview, the regional chief for Ontario said

First Nations need to ensure the conversion of the pipeline from gas to oil does not threaten their waterways or land, and that they benefit from the project.

His organization wants the NEB to halt its review process until proper consultations can be held, including a series of in-person sessions by board staff and TransCanada for communities along the route, and funding to those communities to ensure they have the capacity to assess the proposal.

The Supreme Court of Canada has strengthened the hand of First Nations in resource development by ruling they must be adequately consulted and accommodated on projects that affect their traditional lands. But court has not endorsed aboriginal leaders' claim that they must give their consent before such projects can proceed.

Ontario Energy Minister Bob Chiarelli said this week that the province believes First Nations "are not being adequately consulted" on Energy East. Ontario will intervene at the National Energy Board on the project and has listed a number of "principles" that will determine whether it will support TransCanada's plan – including proper First Nations consultation.

A spokesman for Mr. Rickford said Thursday Ottawa has enhanced funding for those who wish to participate in the NEB process, and that the board has published information on how to participate and how to access funding.

In response to Mr. Chiarelli's complaint, TransCanada chief executive Russ Girling said the company has consulted extensively with the 200 First Nations communities along the route.

"There are a lot of pent-up issues with the aboriginal communities that are totally unrelated to our pipeline but as the pipeline advances, it's a venue in which to vent your other frustrations," he told The Globe and Mail editorial board this week. He said the company has provided funding for First Nations intervenors but is in the early stages of negotiations with them and is confident it will win support.

NEB spokeswoman Katherine Murphy said the board is just getting started with its review, but has been consulting communities in preparation for the hearing process. "We have done extensive aboriginal engagement on Energy East along the pipeline route," she said.

Direct Link:

<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/report-on-business/industry-news/energy-and-resources/first-nations-cite-grave-concern-in-request-for-neb-to-halt-energy-east-review/article22817125/>

Land Claims & Treaty Rights

Dehcho First Nations to debate devolution this week

Grand chief says sticking point remains the amount of land they would control

[CBC News](#) Posted: Feb 02, 2015 8:22 AM CT Last Updated: Feb 02, 2015 8:22 AM CT



Herb Norwegian, grand chief of the Dehcho First Nations, says they are close to signing on to the devolution deal. (CBC)

Dehcho First Nations leaders are gathering together this week to discuss whether to sign on as parties to the N.W.T. devolution agreement.

Grand Chief Herb Norwegian says the First Nations were close to signing on with the territorial government last summer.

Instead, they took more time to see what the agreement would mean to them.

"In the end of the day, what the Deh Cho would end up with is one contiguous piece of land that would rightfully belong to the Deh Cho and whatever happens around it we would be able to have control, have say over what happens to the resources that are around us."

The devolution agreement went into effect April 1, 2014 but aboriginal groups may still sign on. That will allow them to receive a portion of the quarter of the resource revenues the territory has begun collecting. Aboriginal groups will split approximately \$15 million dollars from the first post-devolution year.

The two regions with unsettled claims, the Akaitcho and the Dehcho, have yet to sign on to the agreement.

Norwegian says the main sticking point for the Dehcho is the amount of land they want control over

He says it's more than what the Tlicho and other groups have negotiated for.

He adds that the Dehcho has significantly higher membership than those groups.

The meetings begin Monday in Fort Simpson.

Direct Link:

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/dehcho-first-nations-to-debate-devolution-this-week-1.2939542>

Industry applauds Kaska Nation plan to pass resource law

North American Tungsten says move by 5 Kaska First Nations is 'exciting, positive'

By Nancy Thomson, [CBC News](#) Posted: Feb 02, 2015 10:25 AM CT Last Updated: Feb 02, 2015 4:30 PM CT

The Kaska Nation's announcement that it is planning to pass a resource law to create more certainty for industry is being welcomed by one large mining company with projects on Kaska traditional territory.

The five Kaska First Nations have territory in the Yukon, northern British Columbia, and parts of western N.W.T.

They say they'll pass the law later this year, with regulations to follow.



Chief Brian Ladue of the Ross River Dena Council hopes the law will simplify the process for mining companies. (CBC)

"We're going to create a set of guidelines and policy around when a company comes in, what they have to do to consult the First Nation, what they have to do to accommodate right and title interest on the land to make sure that all of our interests are met," said Brian Ladue, chief of the Ross River Dena Council.

Ladue says the law will simplify the process for mining companies, and ensure good relationships with industry. He says leaders are entrusted to protect and preserve the land for future generations.

North American Tungsten owns the MacTung project north of Ross River, and the CanTung mine north of Watson Lake.

Allan Krasnick, who is on the company's board of directors, says a Kaska resource law is "not threatening in any way" and says such a law would be "an appropriate way to be regulating the use of land."

Krasnick says industry is comfortable with the concept of unceded aboriginal right and title.

"Title is real, it should be real," he said.

"Whoever owns the land, it's not us. We're renting it, using it, at the consent of the underlying owners."

He adds he likes the idea of developing something new that will have depth and "resonance with the community and the industry."

Ladue has said the Kaska don't need permission to pass the law and are not seeking the territory's approval.

"They pass laws, they're a government, they govern how they govern," Ladue said. "And we're a government — we govern how we govern as well."

Ladue says First Nations' inherent right to govern will also guide the law.

"We have unceded rights and titles to our lands. We haven't signed a treaty, we haven't relinquished right and title," he said.

Yukon premier says Kaska can't pass laws

Yukon Premier Darrell Pasloski says he doesn't believe the Kaska have the legal right to pass their own laws, because the Kaska still fall under the Indian Act.



Yukon Premier Darrell Pasloski says since the Kaska Dena fall under the Indian Act, the First Nations don't have the ability to make laws. (CBC)

"My understanding is that Indian Act bands aren't able to proclaim laws," he said.

"Those First Nations who have gone through a modern day treaty, who have a final land claim agreement and self-government agreements have the ability to make laws, but those who have not, do not have that ability to make laws."

Pasloski says there are asserted rights and titles that haven't been surrendered but he says only First Nations with constitutionally-enshrined self-government agreements can pass laws.

The Ross River Dena Council has successfully challenged the Yukon government in court over the government's right to issue mining claims on its traditional territory.

Negotiations are currently underway between the First Nation and the Yukon government over what consultation will look like, and where claims can be staked.

Direct Link:

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/industry-applauds-kaska-nation-plan-to-pass-resource-law-1.2940206>

Special Topic: Missing & Murdered Indigenous Women

Amid letters of support and love, Tina Fontaine's family finds racist hate mail

RENATA D'ALIESIO

The Globe and Mail

Published Thursday, Jan. 29 2015, 10:27 PM EST

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Inside a card decorated in a field of flowers and trees, Thelma Favel – the great-aunt of slain aboriginal teenager Tina Fontaine – received a seething message of hate: “You guys are nothing but a bunch of drunken Indians.”

The handwritten, unsigned note, delivered Wednesday to her rural Manitoba home, is an anomaly among the hundreds of letters of support and prayer she has received since Tina's lifeless body was pulled from Winnipeg's Red River in August.

But the note is piercing, going on to allege that 15-year-old Tina was not a nice person, got drunk in back alleys and was following in her dead father's footsteps. Her father was beaten to death in 2011.

“This is not right what they did,” Ms. Favel said of the card after relaying its contents over the phone Thursday. “All the hatred seems to go to the First Nations people,” she added. “I know the truth. I know Tina and they didn't.”

Although the card is an aberration in Ms. Favel's pile of condolences and well wishes, its sentiment is not incongruous with comments and behaviour that Ms. Favel and other indigenous people have encountered in Canada.

Last week, Maclean's magazine branded Manitoba's capital as the nation's most racist city. Winnipeg's mayor and other community leaders responded in an unexpected address.

Flanked by the city's top cop, the provincial treaty commissioner, First Nations chiefs and community leaders, Mayor Brian Bowman, who is Métis, vowed to combat Winnipeg's racism problem. On Thursday, his office launched a website – 1winnipeg.ca – asking Winnipeggers to share ideas on tackling racism.

“Winnipeg has a responsibility right now to turn this ship around and change the way we all relate – aboriginal and non-aboriginal Canadians alike, from coast to coast to coast,” the mayor said last week.

Tina's death reignited calls for a federal inquiry into Canada's murdered and missing aboriginal women. Ms. Favel believes the Maclean's article, which included a chronicle of Tina's life and death, might have spurred the anonymous writer to send the “nasty” card.

“There is a lot of racism. I've personally experienced lots of it,” said Ms. Favel, who helped raise Tina. “I wish it would just stop. Like Tina said, ‘We're all God's people.’”

Tina's killing remains under investigation. A member of Sagkeeng First Nation, Tina had run away from government care before she was found dead, her body wrapped in a bag.

Ms. Favel spoke with Winnipeg police's victim services about the card's message. She said she was told the note is not a police matter because it doesn't contain a threat. She was advised to hang onto the card and let victim services know if she receives more negative letters.

According to federal government documents obtained by The Canadian Press through access-to-information legislation, Manitoba is one of the worst places for First Nations people to live in Canada.

Internal reports from Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada show Manitoba natives are more likely to grow up in poverty, drop out of school, live off social assistance in dilapidated housing and suffer family violence. Their life expectancy is also eight years shorter than that of other Manitobans.

The 10 regional updates spanning 2012 to 2014 lay out the poor living conditions on Manitoba reserves, but offer little concrete action on the part of the government.

A spokeswoman for Aboriginal Affairs Minister Bernard Valcourt said he was unavailable to discuss the updates or what the federal government is doing to improve living conditions for Manitoba's reserve aboriginals. Emily Hillstrom sent an e-mailed statement that didn't address the poor living conditions.

“Our government believes that aboriginal peoples should have the same quality of life, the same opportunities and the same choices as all other Canadians,” she wrote before outlining legislation the government has passed such as a law that requires reserves to post their financial statements online.

Direct Link:

<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/hate-mail-sent-to-tina-fontaines-family-a-sample-of-winnipegs-racism/article22715919/>

Monica Burns 'not just a 28-year-old aboriginal female'

Todd McKeaveney charged in Jan. 17 death

By Andrea Hill, The StarPhoenix, with files from The Canadian Press January 30, 2015

PRINCE ALBERT — The community support shown during the police investigation into the death of Monica Burns shows how much has changed in Prince Albert in the last eight months, says the head of the city's YWCA.

"People are realizing that Monica Burns, for example, is not just a 28-year-old aboriginal female," Donna Brooks said.

"She is somebody's daughter, she is somebody's aunt, she is somebody's mother. I think the community and people are starting to rally around that."

Burns, from James Smith Cree Nation, was found dead on a remote snowmobile trail northwest of Prince Albert earlier this month.

Todd Daniel McKeaveney of Prince Albert, the 38-year-old man accused of second-degree murder in her death, made his first court appearance at Prince Albert Provincial Court Friday morning. He was remanded until his next scheduled appearance on Feb. 24.

Burns' death is the second publicized attack against an aboriginal woman in Prince Albert in the last year.

Last summer, the city gained national attention when Marlene Bird, a homeless aboriginal woman, was attacked. She suffered severe burns and lost both her legs. In the aftermath of the assault, Bird shared her story and people in Prince Albert organized marches and rallies to call for a national inquiry into missing and murdered aboriginal women.

"The Marlene Bird case really was the turning point in getting people's attention about missing and murdered aboriginal women," Brooks said. "Up until that point, so many missing and murdered women were just statistics."

Since Burns' body was discovered on Jan. 17, her family has been raising awareness of the issue and joining calls for a national inquiry into missing and murdered aboriginal women. Burns' brother walked from Saskatoon to Prince Albert earlier this week and was joined by more than a dozen others in Prince Albert Thursday, the day after McKeaveney was arrested.

RCMP have praised Burns' family and the general public for their support in the investigation.

"The community is rallying behind the fact that this is happening, people are getting attacked — aboriginal women in particular — and it needs to end," Brooks said. "They want people to be brought for justice, they don't want to stand for this, they want to help in any way they can."

Shirley Henderson, chair of the Prince Albert Grand Council's women's commission, said Burns' death has served as "another wake-up call" to Prince Albert residents that the city is still not safe for aboriginal women and people need to continue pressuring the federal government, as they did after Bird was attacked, and working to create programs for those who end up on the street.

"It seems that every time something happens to one of our women, the meetings start taking place and the talks start, but it has to keep going," Henderson said.

"A lot needs to change ... We all have children, grandchildren and we're concerned of when they go out at night to walk across the street to a friend's, we worry about them because we know it's unsafe, that the streets of Prince Albert are unsafe."

Direct Link:

<http://www.thestarphoenix.com/Monica+Burns+just+year+aboriginal+female/10774311/story.html>

AFN chief urges native men to help protect women

KATHRYN BLAZE CARLSON

The Globe and Mail

Published Monday, Feb. 02 2015, 9:36 PM EST

Last updated Tuesday, Feb. 03 2015, 10:59 AM EST

The head of the Assembly of First Nations is imploring native men who have "lost their way" to help prevent the deaths and disappearances of aboriginal women — a tragic reality he says all Canadians must confront, no matter how uncomfortable.

Aboriginal men must address deep-seated issues stemming from the Indian Residential School system, including addiction and cycles of violence, National Chief Perry Bellegarde told The Globe and Mail on Monday.

"When they come out of that system, they're not healthy, they're not well, and they've lost their way," Mr. Bellegarde said, adding that men and their families need better access to wellness centres and treatment programs. "What is the role of men? They're supposed to be protectors, providers."

Mr. Bellegarde, who was elected in December, assumed the helm at a time when Ottawa has come under intense pressure to launch a national inquiry into Canada's more than

1,181 murdered and missing aboriginal women – a probe Prime Minister Stephen Harper has dismissed unnecessary.

“I think there has to be dialogue so it’s in everybody’s face,” said Mr. Bellegarde, who supports an inquiry. “Don’t just skirt around it. The truth may hurt, but let’s deal with it.”

Aboriginal leaders have long called for a national inquiry, but the chorus grew louder after Winnipeg was hit last year by two high-profile cases with stark similarities: Tina Fontaine, 15, was found dead in the Red River in August; Rinelle Harper, 16, was discovered nearly lifeless on a footpath alongside the Assiniboine River in November.

After it was revealed that one of the two co-accused in Ms. Harper’s attack is aboriginal (the other is a minor and cannot be identified), public discussion was reignited about the role of native men in the deaths and disappearances of aboriginal women.

Ms. Harper’s uncle said at the time that violence within the same race is not surprising, but added: “It’s among us. It’s the way we are these days.” And federal Aboriginal Affairs Minister Bernard Valcourt later said part of the problem lies with the “lack of respect for women and girls on reserves,” drawing swift criticism in part because half of First Nations people do not live on a reserve.

Mr. Bellegarde said aboriginal men must get back to the seven sacred teachings – honesty, truth, respect, love, courage, humility and wisdom. “Put those things at the forefront because that will guide you in your life on how you deal with yourself, your spouse and your family,” he said.

The National Chief, who addressed The Globe’s editorial board, also said Canadians need to better understand the legacy of residential schools. About 150,000 children were forced to attend the schools throughout the 1900s. The last one closed outside Regina in 1996.

“People say, ‘Why can’t those Indians be like us? When is enough, enough?’ Well, imagine your son, daughter and grandkids being taken away from you, when they’re five or six years of age, and being put into a residential school system where everything about being that Indian kid is no good,” he said. “You throw in the physical abuse, the sexual abuse, the mental abuse, and you’re not going to be healthy coming out of that ... That’s where the intergenerational effects come in.”

Given the Conservative government’s refusal to launch a federal inquiry into murdered and missing indigenous women, premiers and aboriginal organizations such as the AFN are turning their attention to a national roundtable on the issue in Ottawa on Feb. 27. Several federal ministers have been invited to participate in the event, which will focus on prevention, awareness, community safety, policing and the justice system. Victims’ families will gather in the capital on Feb. 26, and some will be part of the AFN’s roundtable delegation.

“That’s part of their healing,” Mr. Bellegarde said, “having input and sharing their stories.”

Direct Link:

<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/aboriginal-leader-urges-native-men-to-help-protect-women-in-community/article22755092/>

SUMA backs inquiry into missing, murdered aboriginal women



CTV Saskatoon

Published Tuesday, February 3, 2015 9:05PM CST

The Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association is calling for an inquiry into missing and murdered aboriginal women.

The City of North Battleford put forward the resolution Tuesday at the SUMA convention in Saskatoon.

Only a handful of SUMA delegates voted against the resolution, despite debate — some delegates argued an inquiry would be expensive and, ultimately, not lead to results.

A report by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights last month said Canada is obligated under international human rights laws to prevent violence against indigenous women by taking measures to address poverty and other socio-economic factors.

Aboriginal women in Canada are murdered or disappear at a rate four times higher than their representation in the population, the report noted.

The federal Conservatives have said dozens of studies have already been done and the government has pledged money for programs aimed at stopping violence against aboriginal women and girls.

Read more:

<http://saskatoon.ctvnews.ca/suma-backs-inquiry-into-missing-murdered-aboriginal-women-1.2219824#ixzz3Qt3kOCvz>

Missing aboriginal men need more attention, too: N.W.T. mother

'It's really important that we find everybody,' says mother of Philip Leishman, missing since 2004

[CBC News](#) Posted: Feb 05, 2015 8:17 AM CT Last Updated: Feb 05, 2015 8:17 AM CT

Margaret Leishman, whose son Philip has been missing since July 2004, is calling for more attention to be given to cases of missing aboriginal men, in addition to those of aboriginal women.

Recent numbers released by the RCMP show eight aboriginal women have gone missing in the Northwest Territories since 1960, and 35 aboriginal men.

Margaret Leishman says Philip was last seen passing through Kakisa, N.W.T., with a friend who was heading out East.

"A lot of focus is being done on the aboriginal women," she said.



Philip Leishman of Kakisa, N.W.T., has been missing since July 2004. (family photo)

"I understand that, too. It's really important that we find everybody. It's really emotional for me to just sit here . . . to sit here and talk about my son."

N.W.T. RCMP spokesperson Const. Elenore Sturko says it's important to report missing people as soon as possible.

"If you notice someone hasn't contacted you in their normal habit, if they normally call you every week and suddenly they haven't, go to the RCMP," she said.

"Go to your local detachment, and if they are found safely in a short period of time, that's great. If not, we will begin an investigation once we are contacted."

Leishman says her son was often busy with work and would go for extended periods of time without contacting her.

She says she hopes that the spotlight on missing aboriginal women will help raise awareness about missing men as well. She asks people with possible information about any missing person to go to the police.

"Let the RCMP know because there are people that are missing — there are families left behind, and children, and they all worry about each other," she said.

Direct Link:

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/missing-aboriginal-men-need-more-attention-too-n-w-t-mother-1.2945580>

Special Topic: International Indigenous Populations

Obama Seeks Funds For Crumbling Native American Schools, But Not Enough For All Of Them

Posted: 01/30/2015 1:26 pm EST Updated: 01/30/2015 1:59 pm EST



[Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School in Northern Minnesota](#) has leaky roofs, poor lighting and an exhaust system that smells like sewage. Last school year, part of the roof caved in while students were in class. The floors are uneven, and if something goes awry, some hallways are too narrow for students to evacuate safely.

And yet, over 200 Native American students call the school home.

In a call with reporters Thursday, Interior Secretary Sally Jewell highlighted the Bureau of Indian Education school as an example of one that is in dire need of resources. The call emphasized the increased investments for Native youth and education that are part of President Barack Obama's proposed budget for the 2016 fiscal year. A large chunk of this money would be designated specifically for schools run by the Bureau of Indian

Education, the federal agency that operates 183 schools on 63 reservations. However, it won't be enough to help all the bureau's crumbling schools.

"It's hard not to feel sad or angry when I look at the condition of the facilities," Jewell said of Native schools, such as Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig, that are in need of repair or replacement. "We can and we must do better for Native people."

See photos of Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School below.

The president's proposed budget, which will be fully unveiled next week, includes the [biggest investment in Native education since the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009](#), with a total request of \$1 billion, White House officials said on the call. The request is \$150 million more than the amount in this year's budget, and [almost \\$60 million would go to repairing BIE schools](#).

Even though the president's proposal would allocate more money to BIE schools than they received in previous years, it is unclear how much of the money would trickle down to a school such as Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig. A December report from the White House noted that [27 percent of BIE schools are more than 40 years old and over \\$967 million is needed to repair them](#). A construction priority list of BIE schools from 2004 includes buildings that still need to be replaced, and funding would go to them first. While Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig is one of 63 BIE schools classified as being in poor condition, it's unclear whether it will make the cut. Jewell said on the call that the amount the administration requested for school construction help was "as far as we could reasonably go."

The BIE serves only a small portion of Native youth, as over 90 percent of this population attends regular public schools. On the whole, however, BIE students [tend to perform worse academically](#) than their peers.

In early January, Crystal Redgrave, the superintendent of the Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School, told The Huffington Post that she hopes more money is allotted to Native schools for 2016 than in years past.

"Having and allowing and knowing that students and families in these communities have such poor services not only in education but health care and housing, having Congress and representatives know this, to me, now makes them responsible," Redgrave said at the time.

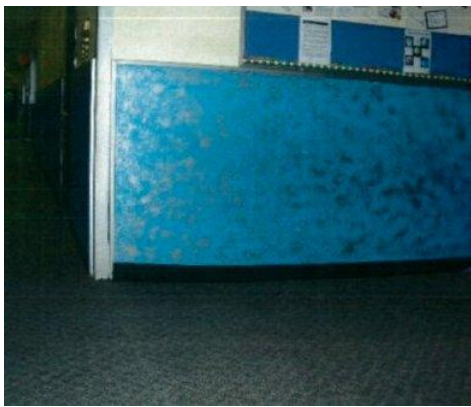
But administration officials are saying that, unlike previous administrations, Obama is focused on serving this population of students. Indeed, Obama's recently announced initiative, [Generation Indigenous, pledges to create programs that would better prepare Native students for college and careers](#).

"Native youth are in a state of crisis, unfortunately we have all seen that firsthand," Education Secretary Arne Duncan said on the call. "Our native youth need and deserve dramatically better, not incrementally better."

The photos below of Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School were provided by John Parmeter, who is head of the school's safety and security. Parmeter wrote the captions, but they have been edited and condensed for clarity.



The high school at Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig is a metal morton tin building. There is no safe area in the school. When wind gusts to 40 miles per hour, the students and staff have to be evacuated to the main building.



The floor is uneven in the hallway of the high school.



The school's bowed roof and cracks in the ceiling.



The bathroom cement and tile are cracked in the high school.



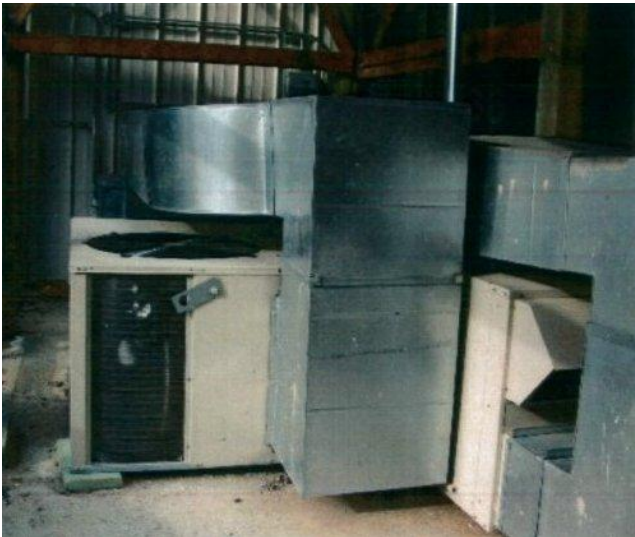
Snow and ice build up by the entrance to the high school.



A water leak caused a ceiling tile to fall.



Students walk around the ceiling leaks in the high school in 2014.



An inefficient heating system in the high school.



Water leaks inside a classroom in 2014.



Exposed wiring hangs in the high school.



Condensation causes wet ceiling tiles in the 2010-2011 school year.

Direct Link:

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2015/01/30/obama-budget-native-american-education_n_6458184.html

Stacey Thunder's 'Indigenous' Series Is Here! Watch the Premiere Episode

[ICTMN Staff](#)

1/29/15

For over a decade, journalist Stacey Thunder (Red Lake and Lac Courte Oreilles Ojibwe) has been the host of the PBS news magazine *Native Report*—and today, she has launched her own online series, *Indigenous With Stacey Thunder*. The show aims to "educate and entertain viewers, empower Indigenous peoples, and bridge culture gaps," and the premiere episode (below) takes on an issue that touches all these concepts, just in time for the Super Bowl: the controversy over the name and mascot of the NFL's Washington Redskins. Enjoy this first installment in what promises to be a vital series on Native topics, and read on for some personal insight from Thunder herself. Episodes are posted to [Stacey Thunder's YouTube Channel](#).

Video of Indigenous with Stacey Thunder - Episode 1

As the show was just about to launch, Thunder took a few moments to discuss her goals and plans with ICTMN.

What is *Indigenous with Stacey Thunder* and what do you hope to accomplish with it?

Indigenous with Stacey Thunder is an online entertainment and educational video series that shares contemporary stories about Indigenous peoples, events, and issues in a positive and high-energy way. The goal is to show the world who Indigenous peoples really are; that we are still here and are many different nations and individuals who do

great and interesting things—not the stereotyped representations that have been formed and shaped over the years. I’m hoping that the series will shift negative perceptions to positive and accurate ones, and inspire viewers to be a part of that movement of change.

In the show's opening sequence, we see some of our favorite people—Billy Mills, Gyasi Ross, Tatanka Means, Kimberly Norris Guerrero, Simon Moya-Smith and more—how many episodes have you finished, and what or whom are they about?

We've shot about six episodes so far, and we plan to cover more stories in Minnesota and Oklahoma. I’m also hoping to cover stories in California, New York, and Washington DC depending on schedules.

The first episode covers the Washington football team name and mascot issue and protest that occurred in Minneapolis before the game against the Vikings last November, which is being released in time for Super Bowl weekend. We decided to kick off the series with this important topic and event to help generate awareness and discussion before the end of the football season, although the issue isn’t just isolated to football.

The other episodes were shot at Nike World Headquarters at the N7 Sport Summit where I interviewed Olympic gold medalist Billy Mills, singer-songwriter Crystal Shawanda, professional pole vaulter Merritt Van Meter, and Sam McCracken of Nike N7, to name a few.



Olympic gold medalist Billy Mills speaks with Stacey Thunder for 'Indigenous with Stacey Thunder' as Johnny Guerrero holds the boom and Heather Rae mans the camera.

You're an experienced television journalist—what are the differences with an online series? Are there advantages?

I decided to release this series on YouTube for a couple of reasons. The first reason is that YouTube is popular and accessible to a broader audience world-wide. It’s also a medium that appeals to our younger generation, who are the next generation of storytellers. I hope the stories will inspire them, and motivate them to share what they’ve learned from watching the series. And there is also more flexibility in terms of when an episode is released. Compared to television where there are set schedules, we have the ability to release each episode at our own pace, which is great. For now, viewers can

expect to see a new episode once or twice a month, and we will always keep everyone posted and ready for the next.

Read more at

<http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2015/01/29/stacey-thunders-indigenous-series-here-watch-premiere-episode-158943>

Editorial: Washington schools should teach Native American history

Originally published Sunday, February 1, 2015 at 4:03 PM

Previous efforts to integrate Native American history, culture and practices into Washington public-school curriculum have failed. A new state law could reverse the course.

Seattle Times Editorial

DESPITE a rich Native American history in Washington, the state has a dismal record of teaching that history in public schools. Correcting that failure is long overdue.

Washington is home to 29 federally recognized Native American tribes, but many of the state's residents don't know that, or much about any of them.

State lawmakers will consider SB 5433, which would require public schools to integrate tribal history, culture and government into curriculum. A similar law, SHB 1495, which passed in 2005, "encouraged" the material be taught, but the majority of the state's school districts do not do so.

State Sen. John McCoy, D-Tulalip, and a member of the Tulalip Tribes, supported the 2005 bill, but was disappointed that lawmakers compromised by using the term "encourage" to get the bill passed. Tribal leaders pushed lawmakers to revisit the issue.

In the meantime, the Office of Native Education, a division of the state's Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, created an online curriculum called "Since Time Immemorial: Tribal Sovereignty in Washington State," which includes lesson plans and multimedia tools for fourth grade through high school. The office also trains teachers and works with districts to partner with nearby tribes.

Of the state's 295 school districts, only 77 sent representatives to take advantage of the training.

Joan Banker, an instruction program specialist for the Office of Native Education, explained that some teachers feel ill-prepared to teach Indian culture and some districts can't afford to send teachers to training.

McCoy said school districts use insufficient funding as a pretext. They've had plenty of time since 2005 to make changes during routine updates to curriculum.

School districts "say they want to be paid for [teaching tribal history and culture)]. I said, 'Excuse me, you are being paid for it,'" McCoy said.

State Sen. Steve Litzow, R-Mercer Island, chair of the Senate Education Committee, agrees with McCoy that providing more tribal history could help Native American students feel engaged and empowered and increase graduation rates.

Native Americans made up 6.2 percent of Washington's students during the 2013-2014 school year, according to the Office of Native Education. The group had the lowest on-time high school graduation rate in the state: 52.5 percent in 2013 compared with 76 percent for all students.

The larger issue is that Washington schools are failing not just Native American students, but all students, by leaving out a huge component of the state's history.

Decades of ignoring history is a disgrace. Passing a law that embraces it is a promising way to move forward.

Editorial board members are editorial page editor Kate Riley, Frank A. Blethen, Ryan Blethen, Mark Higgins, Jonathan Martin, Thanh Tan, Blanca Torres, William K. Blethen (emeritus) and Robert C. Blethen (emeritus).

Direct Link:

http://seattletimes.com/html/editorials/2025586814_editnativeamericancurriculum30xml.html

Wisconsin basketball player and Native American Bronson Koenig says Redskins name doesn't honor his people in any way

By [Scott Allen](#) February 3 at 2:30 PM



Wisconsin sophomore point guard Bronson Koenig, who was thrust into a starting role after senior Traevon Jackson broke his foot last month, is a rarity. As a member of the Ho-Chunk Nation, Koenig is one of 14 Division I men's basketball players who identified as American Indian/Alaskan Native in 2013-14, according to NCAA figures reported by Sports Illustrated.

Koenig [spoke openly with SI](#) about the responsibility he feels to be a role model to Native American youth. Koenig addressed a group of basketball players from the Winnebago Tribe in Nebraska before Wisconsin's regular season finale last year.

Following the No. 5 Badgers' run to the Final Four, the number of speaking requests from tribes only grew.

Koenig, who has embraced the opportunity to be a role model, wasn't shy about sharing his opinion on the use of Native American mascots during a recent interview with [the Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel's Jeff Potrykus](#).

"I am disappointed," Koenig said. "I don't know if I would say angry but kind of angry because I feel like...and with the mascots and all that stuff I think people think it's OK to make fun of us. I don't want to go too far into it. But even other minorities...I feel sometimes like we are lowest of the low, among the minorities. And when a Native American kid sees that growing up and sees the disrespect, it lowers their self-esteem and puts them in a lower place in society. It's just not a good feeling. ... It's honoring them? It's not racist? How are you going to say that when you're not a Native American?"

Koenig told Potrykus that the Redskins name is the most offensive in sports.

"That term comes from when we were skinned and our flesh was red," Koenig said. "I don't see how that is honoring us in any way. Is our skin red? Would it be OK for the Kansas City Negroes or the Blackskins? That's not OK at all."

Direct Link:

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/dc-sports-bog/wp/2015/02/03/wisconsin-basketball-player-and-native-american-bronson-koenig-says-redskins-name-doesnt-honor-his-people-in-any-way/>

More Than 100 Native American Tribes Consider Growing Marijuana

Posted: 02/03/2015 7:32 am EST Updated: 2 hours ago



More than 100 Native American tribes have reached out to FoxBarry Farms, a management firm building the nation's first marijuana facility on tribal land, to express interest in the cannabis industry.

FoxBarry CEO Barry Brautman, whose company also works with tribes to build and operate casinos, told The Huffington Post there has been a surge of interest since the

Department of Justice's [announcement late last year](#) that tribes are free to grow and sell marijuana on their lands as long as they adhere to specific guidelines.

"I really underestimated," Brautman said. "So many tribes are wanting to do this right now."

Brautman, along with the Denver-based United Cannabis Corp., recently inked a contract to [build a giant medical marijuana growing operation](#) on the Pinoleville Pomo Nation's ranch in Northern California. The \$10 million, 2.5-acre facility will include spaces for cultivating, processing and selling products under the United Cannabis brand. Brautman said the operation plans to hire 50 to 100 employees, with preference to tribe members.

As more states legalize marijuana for both medical and recreational purposes, the burgeoning industry may provide an economic boon for tribes across the country, Brautman explained. He's currently in talks with three other California-based tribes, as well as groups in seven other states. He said he hopes to finalize new deals every few weeks in the coming months.

"Tribes want what any government wants for its people, and that's financial independence," Brautman said. "They want to earn their own money, provide education, health care and housing. This new industry allows them to be more economically independent."

A U.S. Department of Justice memo issued in December states that Native Americans are free to grow and sell marijuana as long as they adhere to the [same federal guidelines that govern state-legal operations](#). While marijuana remains illegal under federal law, 23 states have legalized cannabis for medicinal purposes, and four states and the District of Columbia have laws that permit recreational use.

Brautman said the Justice Department memo reiterated what he already knew. He said he had been in talks with at least one tribe about venturing into the marijuana industry before the memo was released. "We did our research and found that the federal government defers to local jurisdictions on how they're going to deal with marijuana," he said. "By the definition of sovereign territories, tribal reservations are exactly the same as local jurisdictions."

Following the Justice Department memo, some speculated that tribes would be reluctant to pursue marijuana-related business ventures. "Henceforward, Indian nations are exempt from the federal government's rules on marijuana," reads a [Daily Beast article from December](#) titled, "Tribes to U.S. Government: Take Your Weed and Shove It" It continues: "But the feds missed an important point when they failed to consult with the 568 recognized tribes in America: they didn't want to be."

Tribes that [express hesitance](#) argue that the federal memo's vague wording may leave them vulnerable to prosecution. "It's like the medical marijuana clinics here in California," Ron Andrade, director of the Los Angeles City/County Native American Indian Commission, [told LA Weekly](#), referring to the hundreds of medical marijuana operations that have been [targeted by federal prosecutors](#) throughout the state. "Yeah, you can have one, but we'll still arrest you."

FoxBarry, however, isn't the only company being contacted by tribes eager to pursue opportunities in marijuana. Chad Ruby, the CEO of United Cannabis, told HuffPost that "dozens" of tribes have reached out to him as well. "This is just the start of our business model," he said. "It is absolutely our plan to team up with tribes all over the country."

Brautman said that for now, he will only enter cannabis-related projects with tribes whose land lies within states that already permit medical or recreational use, even though tribes from non-marijuana states have contacted him. "If an individual visits a reservation, purchases a product, then leaves, they're now in possession of a controlled substance," he said. "Although [tribes] still have the ability to do this legally, I don't think it makes sense from a business perspective."

Critics of the Pinoleville Pomo Nation plan [expressed worry](#) that the sheer size of the operation, located in an area of California already rife with marijuana businesses, will both push out small-scale growers and damage the environment. Brautman countered both of those claims, explaining that smaller growers will have the opportunity to sell their plants directly to the facility and that the tribe has a regulator from the Environmental Protection Agency on site.

While authorities in Mendocino County, where the tribe is based, [voiced concerns](#) when their project was first unveiled, Brautman said he and his team are working to communicate with local lawmakers.

"If I had to characterize these meetings, I'd say they were positive," said Brautman, who has met with the local sheriff's department and plans to sit down with the district attorney in the coming weeks. Mendocino County officials did not respond to HuffPost's request for comment.

Troy Dayton, the CEO of marijuana research firm ArcView, told HuffPost that the Pomo Nation operation likely marks a much bigger trend. "It makes a lot of sense," he said. "It's the right move that Native American lands have been opened up to the same freedoms that states have -- my hunch is that this is the beginning of something larger."

Direct Link:

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2015/02/03/native-americans-marijuana_n_6599984.html

Peru's Indigenous Communities Are Fighting Back Against Environmental Contamination by Seizing Oil Wells

By [Alex Pashley](#)

February 3, 2015 | 12:30 pm

A conflict is raging in Peru's Amazon forests between indigenous groups and an Argentinian oil company. The Amazon dwellers have halted drilling and blockaded a

jungle road for two weeks in protest of what they claim is a decades-long environmental catastrophe.

On January 26th, almost 400 Indians seized at least 14 wells in the Loreto region owned by Argentina's Pluspetrol, according to the Federation of Indigenous Communities in the Corrientes River, or Feconaco.

Members of five Achuar communities obstructed supplies reaching the remote Jirabito facilities near the Ecuador border, while downstream, Quechua tribesmen blocked the Tigre river.

The groups are demanding \$33 million in reparations for use of land in the area, which produces about a quarter of Peru's total 67,000 barrels a day (bpd).

'There's worry that they're generating and searching for conditions to leave the concession without assuming environmental responsibility.'

The government has declared several emergency zones following spills in recent years from leaky, outdated pipelines, with over 90 areas affected. Toxic waste and heavy metals have contaminated waterways and food sources, according to Peru's Environment Ministry.

"The community is demanding payment for damages done in this zone by Pluspetrol, which hasn't assumed responsibility," Henderson Rengifo, an Achuar indigenous leader, told VICE News.

The Argentine oiler, which has operated in the area since 2001, said it had already paid damages to nine communities and called the actions "unjustified" as some settlements lie outside its drilling zones.

The company has said it wanted to "publicly convene" dialog with leaders blocking the Tigre river, as well as those holding the wells, who are paralyzing 3,100 bpd.

Government officials have met with both parties in the hopes of brokering an end to the stand-off.

This isn't the first time grievances over 43 years of local crude extraction have simmered over.

Indigenous groups have protested frequently, scoring victories in 2006, when the government agreed to treat all contaminated water from the extraction process, as well as launching economic development programs — though little has materialized from those agreements.

Last April, demonstrators occupied wells, stopping 70 percent of production at the Jirabito facilities.

"People from government are having conversations there again, but what the communities want are solutions," said Roberto Espinoza, a rainforests advisor at the country's largest indigenous network, Aidesep.

"When production began, there was more petrol spilled than toxic waste to a ratio of nine to one, though after 43 years of investments, toxic waters are greater," he said. "Waters

full of salt, lead, and barium have entered rivers, tributaries, and gullies, and the environmental damage has accumulated to impact animals."

Marco Simons, legal director at Washington-based Earthrights International, which filed a lawsuit on behalf of the Achuars against former concessionaire, US-based Occidental Petroleum, said groups were left with "little choice" but to resort to protest.

"Communities have always had a difficult relationship with oil companies, in part because they were never consulted or given full information about what exploration and production would mean for them," Simons said.

Under Peru's constitution, the state owns the country's mineral wealth, not those who happen to live on top of it. This has put it on a collision course with tribes campaigning for legal recognition of their ancestral lands.

The state has failed to sufficiently regulate the oil sector, in spite of warnings issued by its health and environment ministers over pollution levels, according to Andrew Miller of Amazon Watch.

Miller described an "asymmetrical power struggle" with the "big money interests" of the Energy Ministry and state oil licensor, Perupetro, tending to win over the Environment Ministry and national ombudsman, who's charged with protecting the constitutional rights of Peruvians.

Indeed, the National Human Rights Coordinator said the government had shown "little political will to find solutions to the contamination," and communities were exercising their legal right to protest.

Perupetro will put the concession up for auction later this year, sowing concern that Pluspetrol might withdraw without cleaning up the pollution.

"There's worry that they're generating and searching for conditions to leave the concession without assuming environmental responsibility," Renato Pita, of the North Amazon Oil Observatory, or PUINAMUDT, told VICE News. "There's fear they'll end up unpunished."

The regional government of Loreto would suffer from a lower tax take from the key industry, vital for social spending in the state blanketed by biodiverse rainforest, said Cesar Gutierrez, an oil and gas expert and former president of the state-owned oil company, Petroperu.

The region raked in \$118.2 million from all concessions last year.

With oil and gas blocks now covering over 733,000 square kilometers in the Western Amazon, an area larger than Texas, future drilling of deep, untapped deposits could open up a Pandora's Box of adverse environmental impacts and swathes of pristine forest for deforestation, warn environmental and indigenous groups.

Consultation between the government and indigenous groups before the block is re-auctioned in August is central to the protestors' demands.

Pluspetrol had become "lax" in tackling spills after the state announced the block's license renewal, said Gutierrez, adding the large compensation claim by the protestors made prospects for new investment in the area "remote."

"The hydrocarbon frontier keeps expanding in the Amazon," Matt Finer, of the Amazon Conservation Association, told VICE News. "And with that more indigenous communities are going to be impacted."

Direct Link:

<https://news.vice.com/article/perus-indigenous-communities-are-fighting-back-against-environmental-contamination-by-seizing-oil-wells>

Beloved Native American Is Victim of Hit-And-Run; Fundraiser Launched for Hospital Bills

[Simon Moya-Smith](#)

2/3/15

Police want to know who struck a Denver-based Native American man with their car and then left him in the street wounded and vulnerable.

Isaac Wak Wak, 71, who is of the Colville Tribe of Washington, was leaving the Denver Western Stock Show late on January 25 when he became the victim of hit-and-run. The driver hit the brakes for a moment after striking Wak Wak and then fled, according to witnesses.

"We heard the screech, the thunk and then McKala [said], 'Call 911'," witness Karen Nickle [told](#) Kent Erdahl of Denver Fox News affiliate KDVR. McKala is Nickle's daughter.



Isaac Wak Wak at the Rocky Mountain Indian Chamber of Commerce Gala in 2011. Photo courtesy Carol Berry.

“When I did get into the street I could see the car,” Nickle said. “And then you heard it switch gears and it left.”

The mother and daughter were the first on the scene and stayed with Wak Wak as he lay in the street. They directed traffic away from him until first responders arrived.

Wak Wak’s sister, Diane Yankton, invited the pair to meet the man they likely saved at his hospital bed. She referred to the pair as “little angels.”

“If it wasn’t for them he could have gotten injured even more,” Yankton told KDVR.

“They’re like little angels, you know, when they walked into the hospital room I just said, ‘You two are the ones who actually took care of him. You saved him, you protected him from other cars running into him because he was just laying there in the dark’.”

More than a week later, police have still been unable to identify the driver.

Wak Wak, who suffered broken arms and legs and a broken pelvis, said from his hospital bed he cannot understand how someone could hit a person with their car and then drive off.

“I’m very upset with them,” he [told](#) KDVR. “And they should care. Somewhere along the way they are going to get theirs.”

Wak Wak is a beloved figure in the Denver Native American community. [Family friends have since launched a Go Fund Me page](#) asking the community to donate money to help with Wak Wak’s hospital bills.



Isaac Wak Wak, center back, poses with family for photographer Viki Eagle's project, 'Real Life Indian.' Photo courtesy Viki Eagle.

“He’s such an amazing and loving person who worked his entire life, lived in the biggest cities, made many friends across Indian Country and took them as relatives,” the Go Fund Me page reads. “It’s time to come together to lift his spirits and support him spiritually and financially!”

Wak Wak is also well-known throughout the pow wow circuit, and Yankton is concerned the incident will keep him from dancing for quite some time.

“This is going to have a huge impact on his life,” she told KDVR. “It’s going to take him a long time to recover.”

Witnesses described the car as a dark – possibly black – foreign, souped-up, sporty sedan, with a spoiler on the back. Denver has recently experienced a large number of hit-and-runs throughout the city. In 2012, there were 6,600 victims of a hit-and-run. In 2013, there were 5,500 victims, NBC News affiliate 9News [reported](#).

Anyone with information about the crime should call the Colorado State Patrol.

Read more at

<http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2015/02/03/beloved-native-american-victim-hit-and-run-fundraiser-launched-hospital-bills-159009>

Could Marijuana Be Economic Boost for Native Americans?

Story by AZPM Staff

February 5, 2015



For the Hopi Nation, the revenue potential is recognized, but officials pointed out that tribal law still makes marijuana possession illegal and that tribal members there and elsewhere have often struggled with substance-abuse issues.

Hopi tribal member Jonnie Jay said she smoked marijuana years ago and was skeptical about what good a marijuana grow operation would bring her tribe.

"Somehow it would get corrupted and not be for what it was intended to be," Jay said. "So it is not a good idea for our tribe’s economy, although we desperately need economic growth and opportunity.

In Southern Arizona, the Tohono O’odham and Pascua Yaqui nations have not weighed in on growing and selling marijuana as potential tribal enterprises.

Justice Department officials said the intent of the notice sent in December was not to motivate tribes to get into the marijuana business, but rather to prioritize laws against gangs and violence, driving while high and selling to minors, among other problems.

Direct Link:

<https://www.azpm.org/p/top-news/2015/2/5/55847-could-marijuana-be-native-american-economic-boost/>